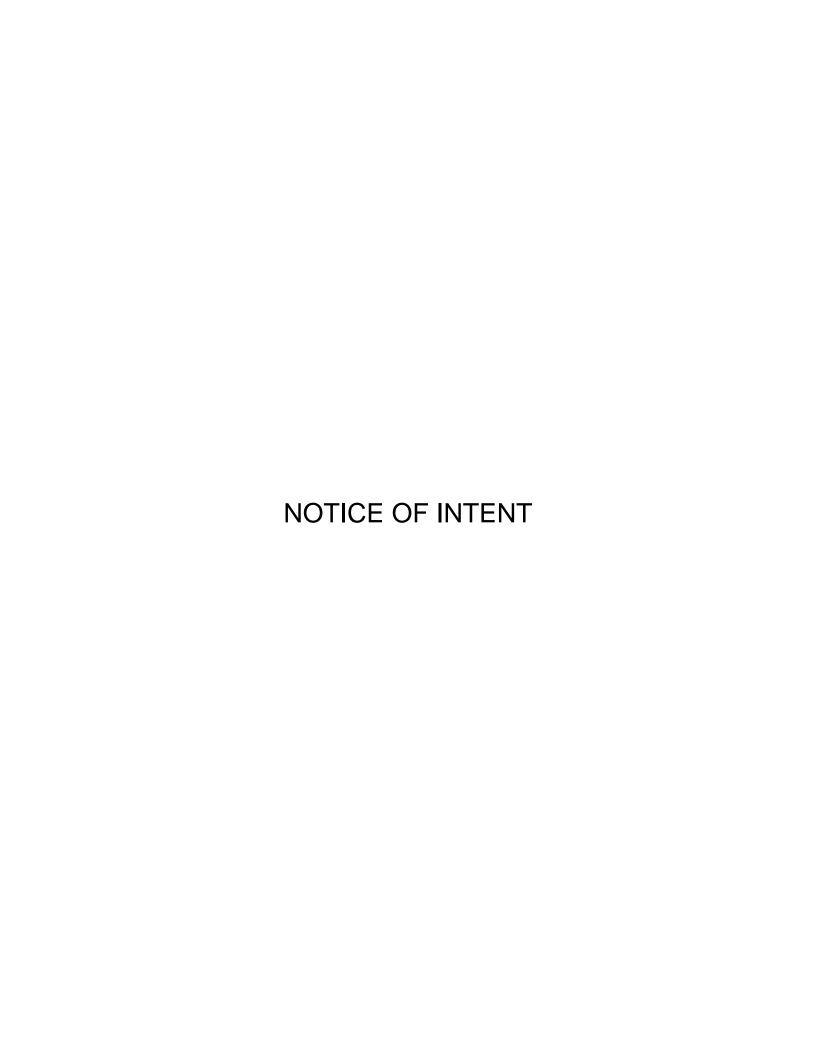
#### APPENDIX K PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT MATERIALS



#### **Meeting Notice**

#### Please Join Us for a Public Scoping Meeting on the Harbor Bridge Project

Tuesday, August 9, 2011

Open House: 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

TxDOT Presentation: 6:30 - 7 p.m. Public comment session: 7 - 8 p.m.

TxDOT Corpus Christi District Office—Training Center,

1701 S. Padre Island Crive, Corpus Christi, TX

Those interested in attending the meeting who have special communication or accommodation needs are encouraged to contact the district public information officer at 361-808-2481 at least two days before the meeting. Because the public meeting will be conducted in English, any requests for language interpreters or other special communication needs should also be made at least two days before the public scoping meeting. TxDOT will make every reasonable effort to accommodate these needs.

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July 8, 2011

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Joanne Wright
Deputy General Counsel
Texas Department of Transportation

Filed: June 24, 2011



Aviation Division - Request for Proposal for Professional Engineering Services

The City of Cotulla and La Salle County, through their agent the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), intend to engage an aviation professional engineering firm for services pursuant to Government Code, Chapter 2254, Subchapter A. TxDOT Aviation Division will solicit and receive proposals for professional aviation engineering design services described below.

The following is a listing of proposed projects at the Cotulla-La Salle County Airport during the course of the next five years through multiple grants.

Current Project: City of Cotulla and La Salle County. TxDOT CSJ No.: 1122COTLA. Provide engineering/design services to extend, rehabilitate and mark Runway 13-31; expand and rehabilitate apron; rehabilitate taxiway; construct parallel taxiway to Runway 13; extend medium intensity runway lights; relocate precision approach path indicators-2; relocate Automated Surface Observing System; modify distance to go signs; partial building demolition and replacement and install deer proof fence.

The DBE goal for the current project is 7%. The TxDOT Project Manager is Harry Lorton.

Future Scope work items for engineering/design services within the next five years may include the following:

1. Construct parallel taxiway to Runway 31

The City of Cotulla and La Salle County reserve the right to determine which of the above scope of services may or may not be awarded to the successful firm and to initiate additional procurement action for any of the services above.

To assist in your proposal preparation the criteria, 5010 drawing, project diagram, and most recent Airport Layout Plan are available online at www.txdot.gov/avn/avninfo/notice/consult/index.htm by selecting "Cotulla-La Salle County Airport." The proposal should address a technical approach for the current scope only. Firms shall use page 4, Recent Airport Experience, to list relevant past projects for both current and future scope.

Interested firms shall utilize the latest version of Form AVN-550, titled "Aviation Engineering Services Proposal." The form may be requested from TxDOT Aviation Division, 125 East 11th Street, Austin, Texas 78701-2483, phone number, 1-800-68-PILOT (74568). The form may be emailed by request or downloaded from the TxDOT web site at http://www.txdot.gov/business/projects/aviation.htm. The form may not be altered in any way. All printing must be in black on white paper, except for the optional illustration page. Firms must carefully follow the instructions provided on each page of the form. Proposals may not exceed the number of pages in the proposal format. The proposal format consists of seven pages of data plus two optional pages consisting of an illustration page and a proposal summary page. A prime provider may only submit one proposal. If a prime provider submits more than one proposal, that provider will be disqualified. Proposals shall be stapled but not bound in any other fashion. PROPOSALS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED IN ANY OTHER FORMAT.

ATTENTION: To ensure utilization of the latest version of Form AVN-550, firms are encouraged to download Form AVN-550 from the Tx-

DOT website as addressed above. Utilization of Form AVN-550 from a previous download may not be the exact same format. Form AVN-550 is a PDF Template.

#### Please note:

Six (6) completed, unfolded copies of Form AVN-550 must be received by TxDOT Aviation Division at 150 East Riverside Drive, 5th Floor, South Tower, Austin, Texas 78704 no later than August 16, 2011, 4:00 p.m. Electronic facsimiles or forms sent by email will not be accepted. Please mark the envelope of the forms to the attention of Beverly Longfellow, TxDOT Aviation Grant Manager.

The consultant selection committee will be composed of local government members. The final selection by the committee will generally be made following the completion of review of proposals. The committee will review all proposals and rate and rank each. The criteria for evaluation of engineering proposals can be found at http://www.tx-dot.gov/business/projects/aviation.htm. All firms will be notified and the top rated firm will be contacted to begin fee negotiations. The selection committee does, however, reserve the right to conduct interviews for the top rated firms if the committee deems it necessary. If interviews are conducted, selection will be made following interviews.

Please contact TxDOT Aviation for any technical or procedural questions at 1-800-68-PILOT (74568). For procedural questions, please contact Beverly Longfellow, Grant Manager. For technical questions, please contact Harry Lorton, Project Manager.

TRD-201102436
Joanne Wright
Deputy General Counsel
Texas Department of Transportation

Filed: June 28, 2011

Notice of Intent - US 181 Harbor Bridge Replacement/SH

286 (Crosstown Expressway) Improvement Project, Nucces County, Texas

Pursuant to 43 TAC §2.5(e)(2), the Texas Department of Transportation (department), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration, is issuing this notice to advise the public that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared for a proposed transportation project. The proposed project is US 181 Harbor Bridge replacement/SH 286 (Crosstown Expressway) improvement project in Nucces County, Texas. The project and study limits include the US 181 and Beach Avenue interchange on the north and the SH 286 and Morgan Avenue interchange on the south.

Two previous NOIs have been published for this project. The original NOI, published on May 27, 2005, reported that the project would replace the existing Harbor Bridge and approaches where US 181 crosses the Corpus Christi Ship Channel for a roadway distance of approximately 2.25 miles. Subsequent to the publication of the 2005 NOI, the project and study limits were expanded to accommodate added capacity that might have included managed lanes or various tolling strategies. A second NOI was published on April 6, 2007, to report this change in project limits and scope. On October 22, 2010, the revised NOI published in 2007 was rescinded, via a notice in the Texas Register, because of changes in the scope (managed toll lanes) and limits. The project limits have now been revised to eliminate the added capacity that would have included managed lanes and various tolling strategies, and have been reduced at the southern limit back to the SH 286 and Morgan Avenue interchange. The new project limits are as follows: the northern limit is the US 181 and Beach Avenue interchange located north of the Corpus Christi Ship Channel but south of the Nueces Bay

Causeway; the southern limit is SH 286 between Morgan Avenue and Baldwin Boulevard; the eastern limit is the I-37/US 181 intersection with Shoreline Boulevard in the Corpus Christi central business district; and the western limit is the I-37 and Nueces Bay Boulevard interchange. The new project limits total approximately 4.5 miles in length from north to south along US 181 and SH 286, and approximately 2.1 miles in length from east to west along I-37.

The EIS will evaluate potential impacts from construction and operation of the project, including, but not limited to, the following: impacts or potential displacements to residences and businesses; detours; air and noise impacts from construction equipment, and operation of the project; water quality impacts from the construction area and from roadway storm water runoff; impacts to waters of the United States, including wetlands; impacts to historic and archeological resources; impacts to public parkland; impacts to communities, including low-income and minority communities; indirect impacts; cumulative impacts; land use; vegetation; wildlife; and aesthetic and visual resources.

The department will consider several alternatives intended to satisfy the identified need and purpose. The alternatives will include the nobuild alternative, Transportation System Management/Transportation Demand Management, and roadway build alternatives. The roadway build alternatives will include replacing the existing US 181 Harbor Bridge and approach roads with a facility that meets current highway design standards.

The project may require the following approvals by the federal government: Clean Water Act Section 404/401 (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers); Clean Water Act Section 402 National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency); Endangered Species Act (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service); Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, Essential Fish Habitat (National Marine Fisheries Service); 1946 General Bridge Act, Joint Aquatic Resource (Navigable Waterway) Permit (U.S. Coast Guard); National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 (State Historic Preservation Officer); and Department of Transportation Act Section 4(f) (Federal Highway Administration). The actual approvals required may change after the department completes field surveys, conducts public involvement activities, and selects the alignment for the project.

A scoping meeting is an opportunity for participating agencies, cooperating agencies, and the public to be involved in defining the need and purpose for the proposed project, to assist in determining the range of alternatives for consideration in the draft EIS, and to comment on methodologies to evaluate alternatives. Public and agency scoping meetings will be held at the department's Corpus Christi District Office - Training Center, 1701 S. Padre Island Drive, Corpus Christi, Texas 78416, on August 9, 2011. The department will publish notices of the meetings, including the times, in general circulation newspapers in the project area.

The department will complete the procedures for public participation and coordination with other agencies as described in one or both the National Environmental Policy Act and state law. In addition to any scoping meetings, the department will hold a series of meetings to solicit public comment during the environmental review process. They will be held during appropriate phases of the project development process. Public notices will be given stating the date, time, and location of the meeting or hearing and will be published in English as well as Spanish. Provision will be made for those with special communication needs, including translation if requested. The department will also send correspondence to federal, state, and local agencies, and to organizations and individuals who have previously expressed or are known to have an interest in the project, which will describe the proposed project and solicit comments. The department invites comments and suggestions from all interested parties to ensure that the full range of issues re-

lated to the proposed project are identified and addressed. Comments or questions should be directed to the department at the address set forth below.

A proposed schedule for completion of the environmental review process is not available.

Agency Contact: Comments or questions concerning this proposed action and the EIS should be sent to Ms. Dianna Noble, P.E., Director, Environmental Affairs Division, Texas Department of Transportation, 125 E. 11th Street, Austin, Texas 78701-2483, (512) 416-3001.

TRD-201102388
Joanne Wright
Deputy General Counsel
Texas Department of Transportation
Filed: June 24, 2011

Public Hearing Notice - Statewide Transportation Improvement Program

The Texas Department of Transportation will hold a public hearing on Monday, July 25, 2011 at 10:00 a.m. at the Texas Department of Transportation, 200 East Riverside Drive, Room 1A-1, in Austin, Texas to receive public comments on the July 2011 Out of Cycle Revisions to the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for FY 2011-2014. The STIP reflects the federally funded transportation projects in the FY 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) for each Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in the state. The STIP includes both state and federally funded projects for the nonattainment areas of Beaumont, Dallas-Fort Worth, El Paso, and Houston. The STIP also contains information on federally funded projects in rural areas that are not included in any MPO area, and other statewide programs as listed.

Title 23, United States Code, §134 and §135 require each designated MPO and the state, respectively, to develop a TIP and STIP as a condition to securing federal funds for transportation projects under Title 23 or the Federal Transit Act (49 USC §5301, et seq.).

Section 134(j) requires an MPO to develop its TIP in cooperation with the state and affected public transit operators and to provide an opportunity for interested parties to participate in the development of the program. Section 135(g) requires the state to develop a STIP for all areas of the state in cooperation with the designated MPOs and, with respect to non-metropolitan areas, in consultation with affected local officials, and further requires an opportunity for participation by interested parties as well as approval by the Governor or the Governor's designee.

A copy of the proposed July 2011 Out of Cycle Revisions to the FY 2011-2014 STIP will be available for review, at the time the notice of hearing is published, at each of the department's district offices, at the department's Transportation Planning and Programming Division offices located in Building 118, Second Floor, 118 East Riverside Drive, Austin, Texas, and on the department's website at:

www.txdot.gov

Persons wishing to review the July 2011 Out of Cycle Revisions to the FY 2011-2014 STIP may do so online or contact the Transportation Planning and Programming Division at (512) 486-5033.

Persons wishing to speak at the hearing may register in advance by notifying Lori Morel, Transportation Planning and Programming Division, at (512) 486-5033 not later than Friday, July 22, 2011, or they may register at the hearing location beginning at 9:00 a.m. on the day of the hearing. Speakers will be taken in the order registered. Any interested person may appear and offer comments or testimony, either

Federal Register: June 22, 2011 (Volume 76, Number 120)] [Notices]

[Page 36613-36614]

From the Federal Register Online via GPO Access [wais.access.gpo.gov] [DOCID:fr22jn11-146]

\_\_\_\_\_

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

Environmental Impact Statement; Nueces County, TX

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of Intent (NOI).

\_\_\_\_\_\_

SUMMARY: Pursuant to 40 CFR 1508.22 and 43 TAC Sec. 2.5(e)(2), the FHWA and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) are issuing this notice to advise the public that an environmental impact statement (EIS) will be prepared for the proposed United States (US) Highway 181 Harbor Bridge replacement/State Highway (SH) 286 (Crosstown Expressway) improvement project in Nueces County, Texas. The project and study limits include the US 181 and Beach Avenue interchange on the north and the SH 286 and Morgan Avenue interchange on the south. Areas within the city of Corpus Christi are included in the study area. The project will be developed in compliance with Section 6002 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Gregory Punske, P.E., District Engineer, Federal Highway Administration--Texas Division, 300 East 8th Street, Austin, Texas 78701. Telephone: 512-536-5960.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The US 181 Harbor Bridge project is listed in the Corpus Christi Metropolitan Planning Organization's Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2010-2035 (the long range transportation plan) as construction of a new bridge over the Corpus Christi Ship Channel. An NOI for this project was first published on May 20, 2005, for proposed improvements that included replacement of the existing Harbor Bridge and approaches where US 181 crosses the Corpus Christi Ship Channel, a roadway distance of approximately 2.25 miles. On March 20, 2007, a revised NOI was published to advise the public that the study limits described in the 2005 NOI had been expanded to accommodate added capacity that might have included managed lanes or various tolling strategies; the primary change was to the southern limit which would have extended the project along SH 286 to SH 358 (South Padre Island Drive). On November 3, 2010, the revised NOI published in 2007 was rescinded, via a notice in the Federal Register, because

[[Page 36614]]

of changes in the scope (managed toll lanes) and limits. The project limits have now been revised to eliminate the added capacity that would have included managed lanes and various tolling strategies and have been reduced on the south end back to SH 286 and Morgan Avenue. The new project limits are as follows: the northern limit is the US 181 and Beach Avenue interchange located north of the Corpus Christi Ship Channel but south of the Nueces Bay Causeway; the southern limit is SH 286 between Morgan Avenue and Baldwin Boulevard; the eastern limit is the Interstate Highway (I)-37/U.S. 181 intersection with Shoreline Boulevard in the Corpus Christi central business district (CBD); and the western limit is the I-37 and Nueces Bay Boulevard interchange. The new project limits total approximately 4.5 miles in length from north to south along US 181 and SH 286 and approximately 2.1 miles in length from east to west along I-37.

The proposed US 181 Harbor Bridge replacement is based on several needs: safety concerns, lack of capacity (need for additional travel lanes), connectivity to local roadways, poor level of service, and increasing traffic demand. In addition to these needs, the bridge's existing structure also has deficiencies, including high maintenance costs and navigational restrictions. The proposed improvements both to US 181/SH 286 and Harbor Bridge will address the structural deficiencies and navigational restrictions and improve safety, connectivity, and level of service in the study area.

The purpose of the project is to correct these established needs identified above and to promote, enhance and spur economic development in the area. It is anticipated that additional larger ship traffic is expected at the Port of Corpus Christi. The impacts and benefits of such will also be analyzed in the indirect and cumulative impacts analyses for the subject project.

Alternatives under consideration include (1) taking no action, and (2) Transportation System Management (TSM)/Transportation Demand Management, and (3) replacing the existing US 181 Harbor Bridge and approach roads with a facility that meets current highway design standards. A Feasibility Study completed in 2003 evaluated four build corridor alternatives, one along the existing alignment and three along new location alignments, as well as the No-build alternative. The Feasibility Study resulted in the identification of a recommended study corridor (new location alignment) for the bridge replacement component. All reasonable alternatives, that meet Purpose and Need of the project, including the alternatives developed in the Feasibility Study, will be identified and evaluated in the EIS, in addition to the No-build Alternative, based on input from Federal, state, and local agencies, as well as private organizations and concerned citizens.

Impacts caused by the construction and operation of the proposed improvements would vary depending on the alternative alignment used. At this time, to the best of our knowledge, significant impacts are anticipated in and to the community; including but not limited to: impacts to residences and businesses, including displacement; impacts to public parkland; social and economic impacts, including impacts to minority and low-income communities; and impacts to historic properties including the bridge itself. Additional impacts could potentially include the following: transportation impacts (construction detours, construction traffic, and mobility improvement); air quality and noise impacts from construction equipment and operation of the roadway; impacts to threatened and endangered species; impacts to waters of the U.S. including wetlands; and potential indirect and cumulative impacts.

A Coordination Plan will be prepared that addresses the project

history, need and purpose, preliminary alternatives, and project schedule. A letter that describes the proposed action and a request for comments will be sent to appropriate Federal, state, and local agencies, and to private organizations and citizens who have previously expressed interest in the proposal. In conjunction with the Feasibility Study completed in June 2003, TxDOT developed a public involvement plan, sponsored three citizens' advisory committee (CAC) meetings, held two public meetings, and distributed two newsletters. Initial agency and public scoping meetings were held in June 2005 and May 2007. A new public involvement program will be developed that includes a project mailing list, project Web site, project newsletters, new agency and public scoping meetings, CAC and Technical Advisory Committee, and informal meetings with interested citizens and stakeholders. In addition, a public hearing will be held after the publication of the draft EIS. Public notice will be given of the time and place of the hearing. The draft EIS will be available for public and agency review and comment prior to the public hearing.

A public and agency scoping meeting will be held at the TxDOT Corpus Christi District Office--Training Center, 1701 S. Padre Island Drive, Corpus Christi, TX 78416, by TxDOT on August 9, 2011 to provide an opportunity for participating agencies, cooperating agencies, and the public to be involved in review and comment on the draft Coordination Plan, defining the need and purpose for the proposed project, determining the range of alternatives for consideration in the draft EIS, and establishing methodologies to evaluate alternatives. TxDOT will publish notice in general circulation newspapers in the project area at least 30 days prior to the meeting, and again approximately 10 days prior to the meeting.

To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action is addressed and all significant issues identified, comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Comments or questions concerning this proposed action and the EIS should be directed to the FHWA at the address provided above.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Research, Planning, and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372, regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities, apply to this program.)

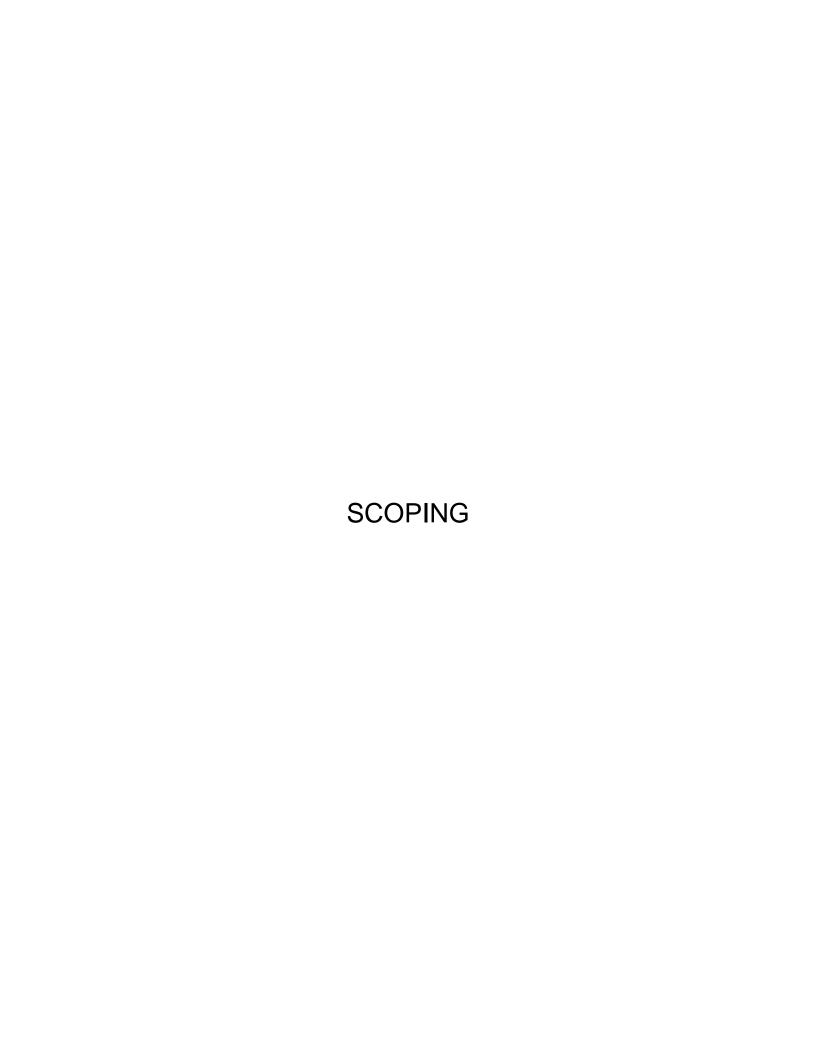
Issued on: June 16, 2011.

Gregory S. Punske,

District Engineer, Austin, Texas.

[FR Doc. 2011-15577 Filed 6-21-11; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-22-P





#### **Public Scoping Meeting**

Harbor Bridge Project
Improvements to US 181 at the Harbor Bridge over the Corpus Christi Ship
Channel

August 9, 2011 5:30 – 8:00 pm

TxDOT Training Center
1701S. Padre Island Drive, Corpus Christi, Texas

#### **AGENDA**

6:30 pm Presentation

Introductions

Why a scoping meeting?

Project phases

History of Harbor Bridge Project

Need for the Project

Current project alternatives

New project development process

Environmental and public involvement process

**Project Timeline** 

7:00 – 8:00 pm Your Comments

#### COMMENTS

Written comments may also be submitted by September 9, 2011 to:

TxDOT Corpus Christi District ATTN: Victor Vourcos 1701 S. Padre Island Drive Corpus Christi, TX 78416

www.ccharborbridgeproject.com



#### What is an Environmental Impact Statement?

- Document required by National Environmental Policy Act for large construction projects that use federal highway funds.
- Discloses project information, describes the project and study areas, and analyzes possible environmental consequences associated with construction.
- Includes public involvement at beginning of EIS development and throughout the process
- Must be approved by the Federal Highway Administration before right-of-way acquisition and construction can begin.

#### FACT SHEET

Improvements to US 181 at the Harbor Bridge - Environmental Documentation and Schematic Development August 2011

#### What is the Harbor Bridge Project?

- Proposed improvements to US 181 at the Harbor Bridge over the Corpus Christi Ship Channel
- Project would extend from Beach Ave on US 181 to Morgan Ave on SH 286
- Federal Highway Administration is the lead Federal agency for the project
- TxDOT is the joint lead agency

#### **Project Development Phases and Anticipated Timeline**

- Public involvement throughout project
- Feasibility Study: completed in 2003
  - Identified four possible corridors plus the "No Build" alternative (leaving the existing bridge in place) and evaluated each one in terms of traffic/planning, engineering, and environmental/public involvement issues
- Initiate Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) project development with public and agency scoping meetings - 2011
- Develop alternatives and begin agency coordination 2012
- Public Meeting 2012 2013
- Prepare and review draft environmental document 2012 2014
- Public Meeting Design Guideline Workshop 2013
- Public Hearing 2014 2015
- Prepare and review final environmental document 2014 -2017
- Public involvement throughout process
- Environmental Clearance ROD issued 2017 or as early as
- Permits and approvals 2015 2017
- Right-of-way mapping/acquisition: 2015 2017
- Preparation of detailed construction plan: 2015 2017
- Start of phased construction 2017 2020

#### Stay involved in the Harbor Bridge Project by participating in the following:

- Attend Public Scoping Meetings (today and later this year)
- Follow the project online: www.ccharborbridgeproject.com
- Sign up to be on our mailing list (tonight or on the website)
- Attend public meetings and public hearing
- Participate in small stakeholder meetings
- Read our newsletter
- Participate in the Citizens' Advisory Committee

#### For more information, contact:

TxDOT Project Manager, Victor E. Vourcos at: 361-808-2378 TxDOT Public Information Officer, Tom Tagliabue at 361.808.2481



# Texas Department of Transportation Corpus Christi District

U.S. 181 Harbor Bridge Project

Environmental Documentation and Schematic Development

**Public Scoping Meeting** 

August 9, 2011



### Welcome

John A. Casey, P.E.

District Engineer

Victor E. Vourcos, P.E.

Harbor Bridge Project Manager

Texas Department of Transportation

Corpus Christi District Office



### Tonight's Agenda

• 5:30 -6:30 PM - Open House

6:30 PM - Presentation

7:00 PM - Public Comment Session

• 8:00 PM - Adjourn



### **Tonight's Presentation**

- Introductions
- Why a scoping meeting?
- Project phases
- History of Harbor Bridge Project
- Need for the Project
- Current project alternatives
- New project development process
- Environmental and public involvement process
- Project timeline



### Why a Scoping Meeting?

- To provide information on the current status of Harbor Bridge project
- To explain environmental, public involvement and engineering design processes
- To listen to your comments





### What is the Harbor Bridge Project?

- Proposed improvements to US 181 at the Harbor Bridge over the Corpus Christi Ship Channel.
- Project would extend from Beach Ave on US 181 to Morgan Ave on SH 286



- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is the lead Federal agency for project
- TxDOT is the joint lead agency



#### **Project Phases**

- Feasibility Study Completed in 2003
- Environmental process and schematic development – Now reinitiated
- Public involvement continuous throughout project development
- Environmental documentation approved
- Right-of-Way mapping/acquisition
- Preparation of detailed construction plan
- Construction



### **Project History and Status**

- 2001 Harbor Bridge Project initiated
- 2003 Feasibility Study completed
- 2004 Environmental and schematic development initiated
- 2005 First scoping meetings held
- 2007 Project limits extended and second round of scoping meetings held



### **Project History and Status**

- 2007 The project put on hold due to lack of funding
- 2009 Project reinitiated with new project limits
- 2010 FHWA determined project should be developed under new procedures
- 2011 New Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement published
- Tonight is the initiation of a new scoping process



#### **Summary of Feasibility Study**

- Determined purpose and need for improved Harbor Bridge
- Looked at feasibility of various corridors
- Considered input from the public and other stakeholders
- Identified and evaluated corridors for Harbor Bridge



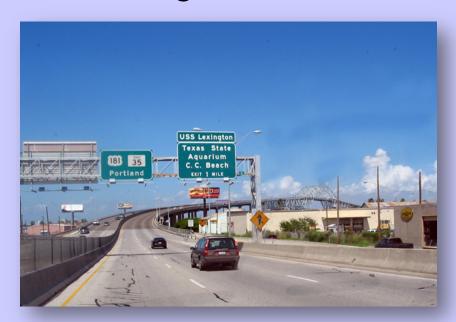
# Feasibility Study Harbor Bridge Corridors





#### **Summary of Feasibility Study**

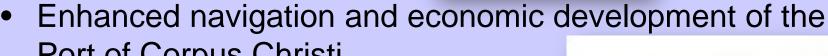
- Red Corridor received the highest ranking
- However, All corridors, including the No-Build, to be considered during the current EIS process





#### **Need for Harbor Bridge Improvement**

- Safety issues and roadway deficiencies
  - Steep vertical grades
  - Lack of shoulders
  - Sharp horizontal curves
- Connectivity to local streets



Port of Corpus Christi

High maintenance costs

Hurricane evacuation







# Current Alternatives under Consideration

The four alternatives (plus the No Build) brought forward from the Feasibility Study are shown on the next slide:

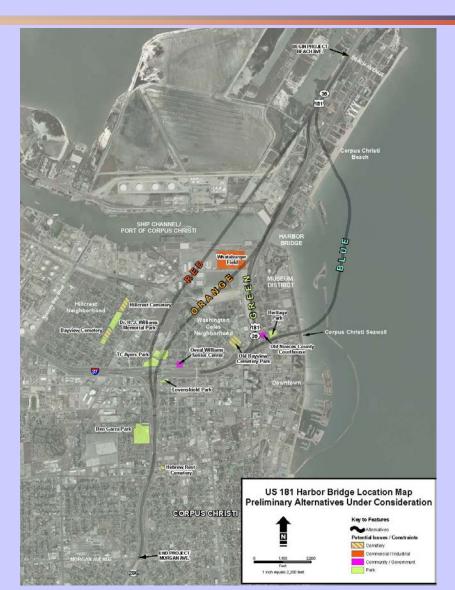
Red Alternative
Orange Alternative
Green Alternative
Blue Alternative



The intent of the project is to replace the existing bridge.



## US 181 Harbor Bridge Location Map





# **Current Alternatives - Preliminary Considerations**

US 181 - Harbor Bridge Preliminary Considerations								
Issue		Issue for Alternative						
		No Build	Red	Orange	Green	Blue		
Engineering Right-of-Way Environmental	Environmental Justice Neighborhoods		X	X				
	Wetlands, Ecology, and Threatened/Endangered Species					X		
	Hazardous Material Sites		X	X	X			
	Historic Resources including Existing Bridge		X	X	X	X		
	Substantial Right-of-Way Needed		X	X		X		
	Impacts to Parks or Recreation Areas		X	Х		Х		
	Impacts to Major Existing or Planned Developments		X	X	Х	X		
	Safety Considerations	X			X	X		
	Design Standards	X			Х			
	Construction Cost*	None	\$600-\$800 Million	\$500-\$700 Million	\$400-\$500 Million	\$500-\$700 Million		

<sup>\*</sup>All costs are preliminary based on current available engineering in order to provide an order of magnitude estimate



# New Project Development Process

- Project will be developed under SAFETEA-LU
  - Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation
     Equity Act: A Legacy for Users," Federal transportation
     bill enacted on August 10, 2005
- What does this mean?
  - Requires preparation of a Coordination Plan
  - Input from the public, federal and state agencies



# New Project Development Process

- What is a Coordination Plan?
  - A plan to facilitate and document TxDOT's interaction with the public and agencies
  - Informs the public and agencies of how the Coordination Plan will be coordinated and revised
  - The Coordination Plan will promote an efficient and streamlined process
  - Encourages the public and agency participation in the project development including the Need & Purpose and Project Build Alternatives

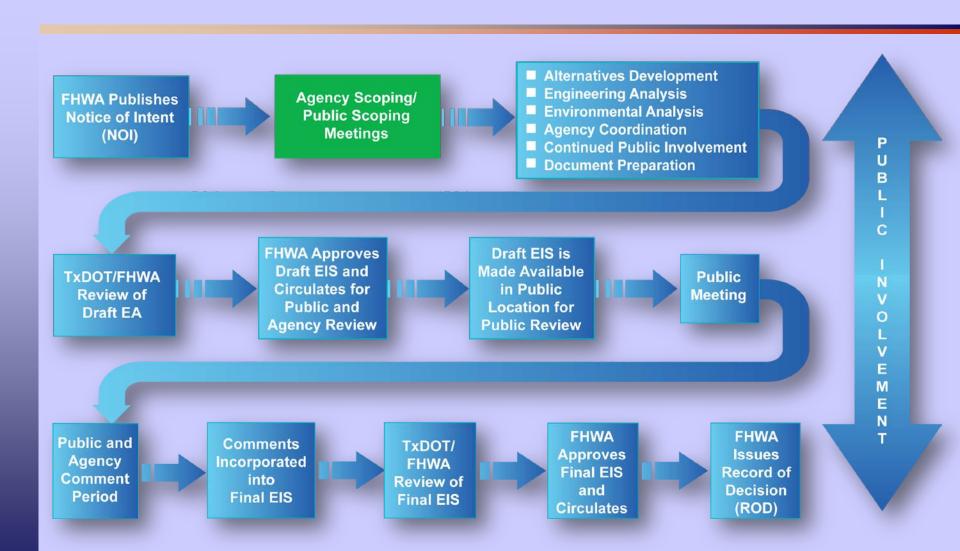


#### **Alternative Evaluation Process**

- Evaluation criteria developed for all alternatives
- Criteria fall into three categories:
  - Environmental/Public Involvement Issues
  - Traffic/Planning
  - Engineering
- Each alternative will be evaluated and ranked
- The evaluation and rankings will be shown at the public meeting and the public hearing



# **Environmental Documentation**Process





#### **Harbor Bridge Timeline**

# Prepare Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) followed by Record of Decision (ROD)

- Initiate project development with scoping meetings 2011
- Develop alternatives and begin agency coordination 2012
- Public Meeting 2012 2013
- Prepare and review draft environmental document 2012 2014
- Public Meeting Design Guideline Workshop 2013
- Public Hearing 2014 2015
- Prepare and review final environmental document 2014 2017
- Public involvement throughout process
- Environmental Clearance ROD issued 2017 or as early as 2014



### **Harbor Bridge Timeline**

- Obtain permits and approvals 2015 2017
- Prepare ROW Map and Acquire ROW 2015 2017
- Develop construction plans 2015 2017
- Start phase construction 2017 2020





### **Public Involvement Opportunities**

# Stay involved in the Harbor Bridge Project by participating in the following:

- Public scoping meetings (today and later this year)
- Follow the project online: www.ccharborbridgeproject.com
- Sign up to be on our mailing list (tonight or on the website)
- Attend public meetings and public hearing
- Participate in small stakeholder meetings
- Read our newsletter
- Participate in the Citizens' Advisory Committee
- Contact TxDOT Project Manager or Public Information Officer



# **Your Comments**

**Improvements to US 181 from Beach Avenue to Morgan Avenue on SH 286** 



#### Why are Improvements to Harbor Bridge Needed?

- Existing safety issues and roadway deficiencies
  - Steep vertical grades
  - Lack of shoulders
  - Sharp horizontal curves
- Inefficient connectivity to the local street and road system
- The existing Harbor Bridge has a vertical clearance that is insufficient for modern cargo and cruise ships.
- The current Harbor Bridge has continuing high maintenance costs because it is a steel structure over salt water.
- US 181 is an alternative hurricane evacuation route for the Corpus Christi area.

#### **What Is The Purpose Of This Project?**

- Improving safety, thereby reducing accident rates
- Improving roadway and bridge deficiencies, meeting current design standards, and reducing the amount of needed maintenance
- Providing greater economic development opportunities for the Port by increasing the vertical clearance up to 205 feet for larger vessels
- Improving the connectivity to the local roadway system by improving the entrance and exit ramp connections to existing streets
- Providing for improvement of intermodal transportation by enhancing highways, Port access, and pedestrian and bicycle modes that would facilitate the movement of people and goods
- Providing adequate capacity to meet future traffic demands and volumes
- Maintaining and improving access to US 181 north as an alternative hurricane evacuation route for the Corpus Christi area

**Improvements to US 181 from Beach Avenue to Morgan Avenue on SH 286** 

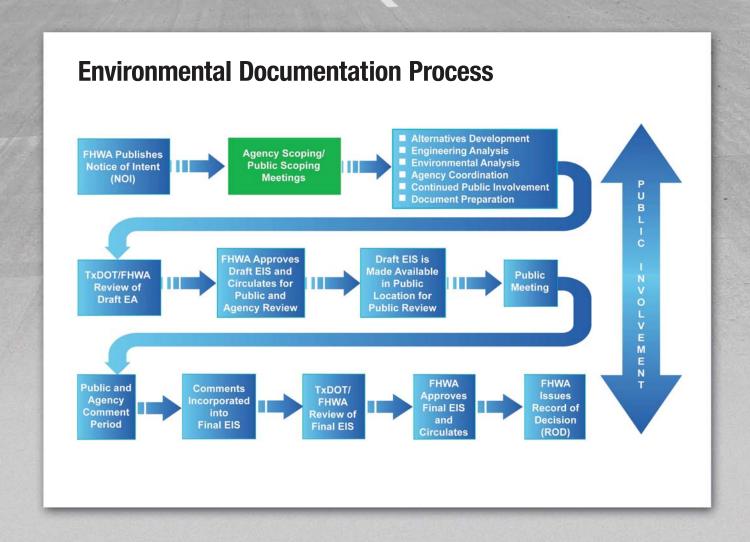


#### **Environmental and Engineering Considerations**

#### **Description** Federal Threatened and Endangered Species Habitat Vegetation (by Type) Waters of the U.S. (Including Wetlands) **Environmental Justice** Floodplain Prime Farmland Parks **Known Historic Properties Known Archeological Sites** Noise Hazardous Material Sites Oil/Gas Wells Gas/Oil Pipelines **Commercial Displacements** Residential Displacements Community Facilities (Churches, Schools, Fire/Police Stations, Hospitals) **Construction Cost** Right-of-way Cost **Utility Cost** Proposed Right-of-way Length System Interconnectivity Safety Mobility

**Improvements to US 181 from Beach Avenue to Morgan Avenue on SH 286** 



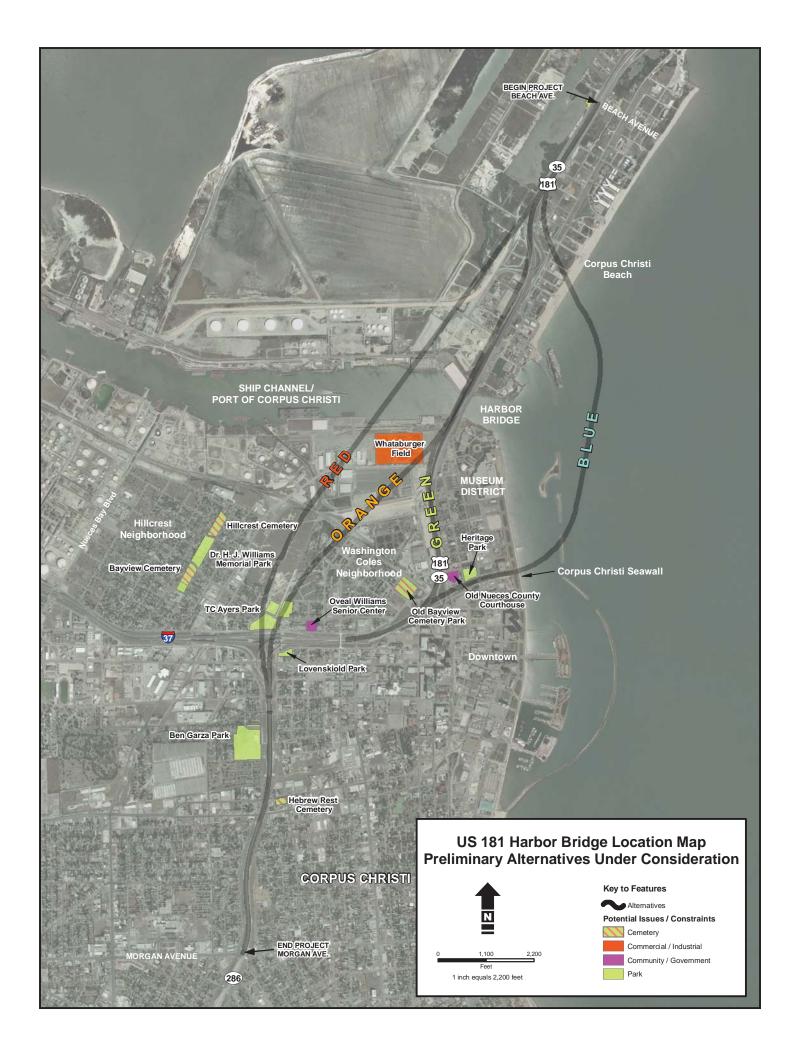


**Improvements to US 181 from Beach Avenue to Morgan Avenue on SH 286** 



#### **Harbor Bridge Project History**

- 2001 Harbor Bridge Project initiated
- 2003 Feasibility Study completed
- 2004 Environmental and schematic development initiated
- 2005 First scoping meetings were held
- 2007 Project limits extended and managed/tolled lanes proposed, and a second round of scoping meetings were held
- 2007 The project was put on hold due to lack of funding
- 2009 Project was reinitiated with new shorter limits and no managed/tolled lanes
- 2010 FHWA determines project should be developed under new procedures
- 2011 New Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement published
- Tonight is initiation of a new scoping process



# Follow-up Public Scoping Meeting on the Harbor Bridge Project

P R O J E C T

www.ccharborbridgeproject.com

Thursday, October 27, 2011 Open House: 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. TxDOT Presentation: 6:30 – 7 p.m. Public Comment Session: 7 – 8 p.m.

Congressman Solomon P. Ortiz International Center
Nueces Room
402 Harbor Drive, Corpus Christi, TX



If you have special communication or accommodation needs, please contact the district public information officer at 361-808-2481 at least two days before the meeting. Because the public meeting will be conducted in English, any requests for language interpreters or other special communication needs should also be made at least two days before the public scoping meeting. TxDOT will make every reasonable effort to accommodate these needs.

For additional information, contact Victor Vourcos at TxDOT: 361-808-2378



#### **Public Scoping Meeting**

Harbor Bridge Project
Improvements to US 181 at the Harbor Bridge over the Corpus Christi Ship
Channel

October 27, 2011 5:30 – 8:00 pm

Solomon P. Ortiz International Center, Nueces Room 401 Harbor Drive, Corpus Christi, TX

#### **AGENDA**

5:30 - 6:30 pm Open House

Introductions

Why a scoping meeting?

Project phases

History of Harbor Bridge Project

**Project Timeline** 

Need and Purpose for the project

Project alternatives

Alternatives analysis methodology Public involvement opportunities

**Project Timeline** 

7:00 - 8:00 pm Your Comments

#### COMMENTS

Written comments may also be submitted by December 1, 2011 to:

TxDOT Corpus Christi District ATTN: Victor Vourcos 1701 S. Padre Island Drive Corpus Christi, TX 78416 Victor.Vourcos@txdot.gov

www.ccharborbridgeproject.com



#### What is an Environmental Impact Statement?

- Document required by National Environmental Policy Act for large construction projects that use federal highway funds.
- Discloses project information, describes the project and study areas, and analyzes possible environmental consequences associated with construction.
- Includes public involvement at beginning of EIS development and throughout the process
- Must be approved by the Federal Highway Administration before right-of-way acquisition and construction can begin.

#### FACT SHEET

Improvements to US 181 at the Harbor Bridge - Environmental Documentation and Schematic Development October 2011

#### What is the Harbor Bridge Project?

- Proposed improvements to US 181 at the Harbor Bridge over the Corpus Christi Ship Channel
- Project would extend from Beach Ave on US 181 to Morgan Ave on SH 286
- Federal Highway Administration is the lead Federal agency for the project
- TxDOT is the joint lead agency

#### **Project Development Phases and Anticipated Timeline**

- Public involvement throughout project
- Feasibility Study: completed in 2003
- Initiate Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) project development with two sets of public and agency scoping meetings - 2011
- Develop alternatives and begin agency coordination 2012
- Public Meeting 2012 2013
- Prepare and review draft environmental document 2012 2014
- Public Meeting Design Guideline Workshop 2013
- Public Hearing 2014 2015
- Prepare and review final environmental document 2014 -2017
- Public involvement throughout process
- Environmental Clearance ROD issued 2017 or as early as 2014
- Permits and approvals 2015 2017
- Right-of-way mapping/acquisition: 2015 2017
- Preparation of detailed construction plan: 2015 2017
- Start of phased construction 2017 2020

#### Stay involved in the Harbor Bridge Project by participating in the following:

- Submit comments at today's Public Scoping Meeting and afterward via mail, email or online.
- Follow the project online: www.ccharborbridgeproject.com
- Sign up to be on our mailing list (tonight or on the website)
- Attend public meetings and public hearing
- Participate in small stakeholder meetings
- Read our newsletter
- Participate in the Citizens' Advisory Committee or Technical Advisory Committee

#### For more information, contact:

TxDOT Project Manager, Victor E. Vourcos at: 361-808-2378 TxDOT Public Information Officer, Tom Tagliabue at 361.808.2481



# Texas Department of Transportation Corpus Christi District

U.S. 181 Harbor Bridge Project

Environmental Documentation and Schematic Development

**Public Scoping Meeting** 

October 27, 2011



## Welcome

John A. Casey, P.E.

District Engineer

Victor E. Vourcos, P.E.

Harbor Bridge Project Manager

Texas Department of

Transportation

Corpus Christi District Office



## **Tonight's Agenda**

- 5:30 6:30 PM
- 6:30 PM
- 7:00 PM
- 8:00 PM

- Open House
- Presentation
- Public Comment Session
- Adjorn



## **Today's Presentation**

- Why a scoping meeting?
- Project overview
  - Definition and history of Harbor Bridge Project
- Modifications based on input from first Scoping Meeting (held on August 9, 2011)
  - Need and Purpose further developed
  - New alternatives added
  - Process further developed for alternatives analysis
  - Coordination Plan modified
- Project Timeline



## Why a Scoping Meeting?

- Second Scoping Meeting
- To provide information on the current status, including changes that reflect input from first scoping meeting
- To provide an opportunity to be involved in developing the Need and Purpose and range of alternatives
- To listen to your comments





## Texas Department Transportation What is the Harbor Bridge Project?

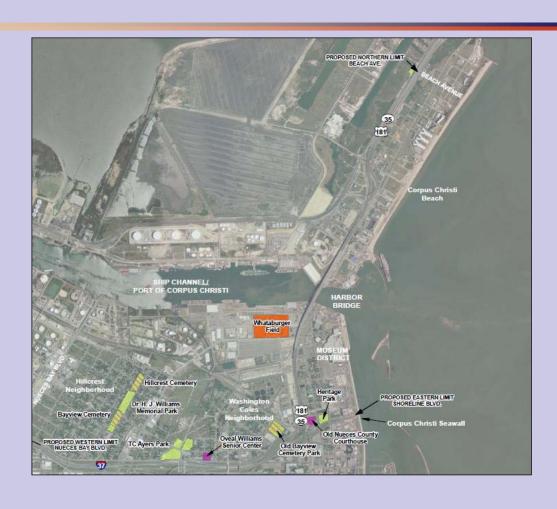
- Proposed improvements to US 181 at the Harbor Bridge over the Corpus Christi Ship Channel.
- Project would extend from Beach Ave on US 181 to Morgan Ave on SH 286



- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is the lead Federal agency for project
- TxDOT is the joint lead agency



# What is the Harbor Bridge Project?





## **Project History and Status**

- 2001 Harbor Bridge Project initiated
- 2003 Feasibility Study completed
- 2004 Environmental and schematic development initiated
- 2005 First scoping meetings held
- 2007 Project limits extended and second round of scoping meetings held



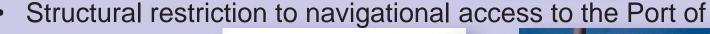
## **Project History and Status**

- 2007 The project put on hold due to lack of funding
- 2009 Project reinitiated with new project limits
- 2010 FHWA determined project should be developed under SAFTEA-LU
- 2011 New Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS published



## **Need for Harbor Bridge Project**

- Additional details were added to need for the project since the first scoping meeting
- Safety risks (Including hurricane evacuation)
  - Lack of shoulders
  - Steep vertical grades
  - Sharp horizontal curves
  - Non-standard ramp lengths and spacing



Corpus Christi





## **Need for Harbor Bridge Project**

- Increased difficulty in maintaining the structure over the long term
- Limited connection to local roadways
- Limited capacity to meet future traffic demands







## Purpose of the Harbor Bridge Project

- Mitigate geometric deficiencies for the highway, including the Harbor Bridge (reduce sharp curves and steep grades) to improve safety for the travelling public including during hurricane evacuations
- Reduce the structural restriction to navigational access at the Port of Corpus Christi (raise the bridge height), thereby promoting expansion and economic opportunity in the area
- Maximize the long-term operation of the Harbor Bridge structure
- Improve the connectivity to the local roadway system
- Meet current standards for capacity on US 181, including the Harbor Bridge, considering projected future traffic demand



#### **Alternatives Under Consideration**

Feasibility Study and scoping process – six build alternatives (plus the No Build) are being

considered:

Red Alternative

- Orange Alternative
- Green Alternative
- Blue Alternative
- Tunnel Alternative\*
- West Alternative\*



\*new alternatives from 1st Scoping Meeting



# US 181 Harbor Bridge Location Map





# **Summary of Preliminary Environmental Constraints**

US 181 – Preliminary Considerations								
Constraints		Alternative Constraints						
		No Build	Red	Orange	Green	Blue	West	Tunnel
Environmental	Environmental Justice neighborhoods		х	x			Х	
	Wetlands, Ecology, and Threatened and Endangered Species					Х	Х	
	Hazardous materials		Х	Х	Х		Х	Х
	Historic Resources		Х	X	x	X	Х	x
Right-of Way	Substantial Right-Of-Way		Х	Х		Х	Х	
	Impacts to Parks or Recreational Areas		Х	X		X		
	Impacts to Major Existing or Planned Developments		Х	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х
Engineering	Safety Considerations	Х			Х	Х		Х
	Design Standards	X			Х			Х



## Texas Object Alternatives Analysis Methodology

- Analysis process further developed
  - Measures of Effectiveness (MOEs) developed to evaluate whether a particular alternative meets the Need & Purpose
    - Each alternative to be evaluated against MOEs
    - Alternatives may be eliminated from further evaluation if they do not satisfy MOEs, and, therefore, the need and purpose of the proposed project
  - Alternatives that satisfy the MOEs will be evaluated further



#### **Coordination Plan**

- Facilitates and documents TxDOT's and FHWA's interaction with the public and agencies
- Encourages public/agency input to develop Need and Purpose and project build alternatives
- Revised Draft Coordination Plan available
  - Copies available for review tonight and online
  - Comments accepted for 30 days following this meeting
  - Final plan to be produced following the 30-day comment period (Ending December 1, 2011).



## **Harbor Bridge Timeline**

# Prepare Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) followed by Final EIS and Record of Decision (ROD)

- Initiate project development with scoping meetings 2011
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## **Harbor Bridge Timeline**

- Obtain permits and approvals 2015 2017
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- Develop construction plans 2015 2017
- Start phase construction 2017 2020





## **Public Involvement Opportunities**

# Stay involved in the Harbor Bridge Project by participating in the following:

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- Sign up to be on our mailing list (tonight or on the website)
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## **Public Involvement Opportunities**

# Stay involved in the Harbor Bridge Project by participating in the following:

- Contact TxDOT Project Manager or Public Information Officer
  - Victor E. Vourcos, P.E. Phone: 361.808.2378
     Victor.Vourcos@txdot.gov
  - Tom Tagliabue Phone 361.808.2481 Tom.tagliabue@txdot.gov



## **Public Involvement Opportunities**

#### Citizens Advisory Committee

- Receive information from TxDOT on progress of project
- Promote public awareness and understanding of project
- Advise TxDOT on community ideas regarding the project as well as how best to communicate with community



### **Your Comments**

#### Written Comments

• 30 day comment period ending December 1, 2011

#### **Verbal Comments**

Please limit comments to 3 minutes to give everyone an opportunity to speak



#### **Your Comments**

# Speaker's Time Remaining:



**Improvements to US 181 from Beach Avenue to Morgan Avenue on SH 286** 



#### Why are Improvements to Harbor Bridge Needed?

- Existing safety issues and roadway deficiencies
  - Steep vertical grades
  - Lack of shoulders
  - Sharp horizontal curves
- Inefficient connectivity to the local street and road system
- The existing Harbor Bridge has a vertical clearance that is insufficient for modern cargo and cruise ships.
- The current Harbor Bridge has continuing high maintenance costs because it is a steel structure over salt water.
- US 181 is an alternative hurricane evacuation route for the Corpus Christi area.

#### **What Is The Purpose Of This Project?**

- Improving safety, thereby reducing accident rates
- Improving roadway and bridge deficiencies, meeting current design standards, and reducing the amount of needed maintenance
- Providing greater economic development opportunities for the Port by increasing the vertical clearance up to 205 feet for larger vessels
- Improving the connectivity to the local roadway system by improving the entrance and exit ramp connections to existing streets
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**Improvements to US 181 from Beach Avenue to Morgan Avenue on SH 286** 

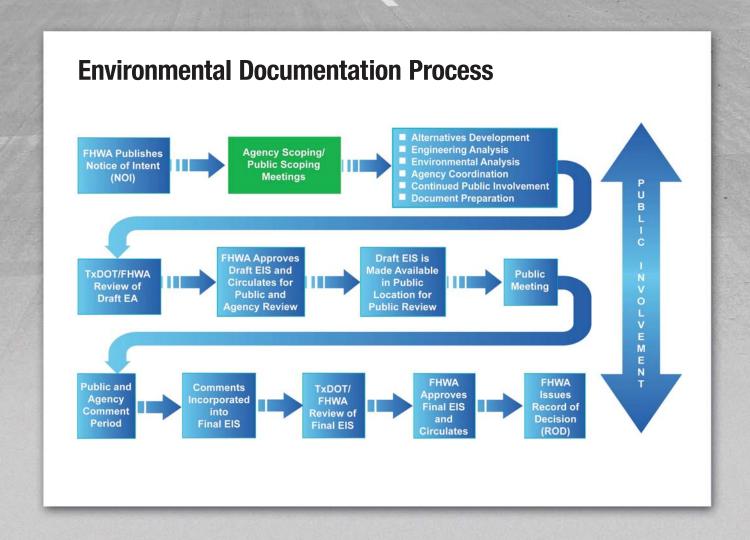


#### **Environmental and Engineering Considerations**

#### **Description** Federal Threatened and Endangered Species Habitat Vegetation (by Type) Waters of the U.S. (Including Wetlands) **Environmental Justice** Floodplain Prime Farmland Parks **Known Historic Properties Known Archeological Sites** Noise Hazardous Material Sites Oil/Gas Wells Gas/Oil Pipelines **Commercial Displacements** Residential Displacements Community Facilities (Churches, Schools, Fire/Police Stations, Hospitals) **Construction Cost** Right-of-way Cost **Utility Cost** Proposed Right-of-way Length System Interconnectivity Safety Mobility

**Improvements to US 181 from Beach Avenue to Morgan Avenue on SH 286** 





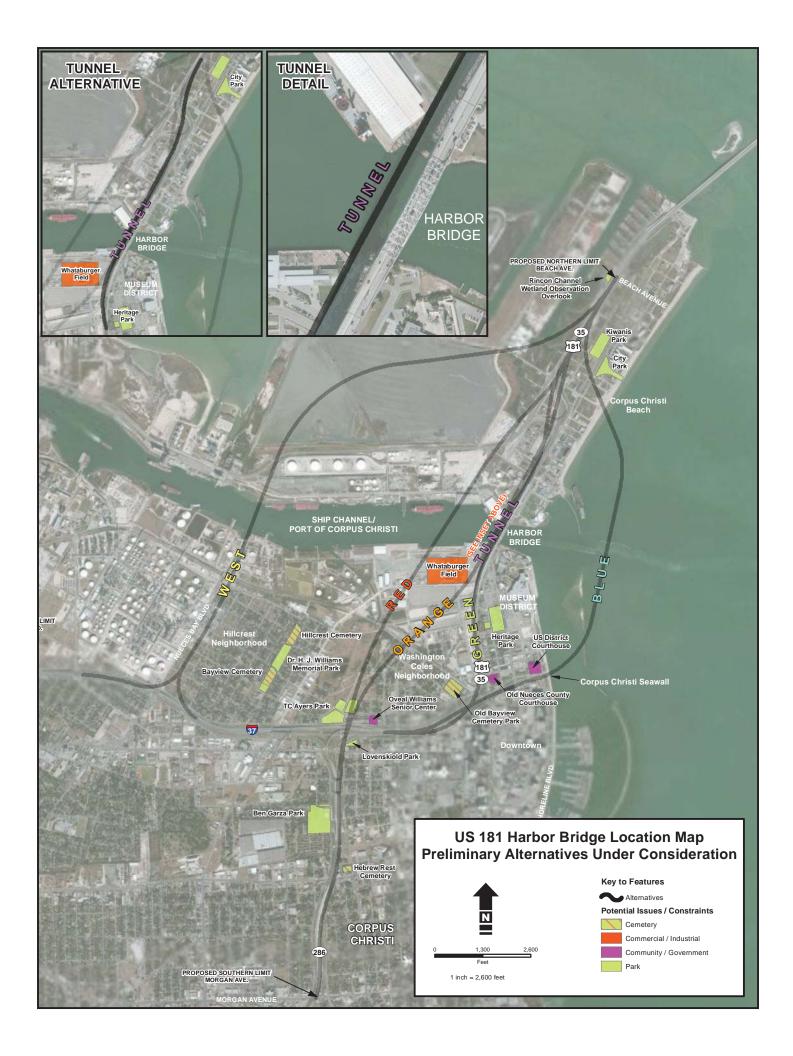
## **Harbor Bridge Project**

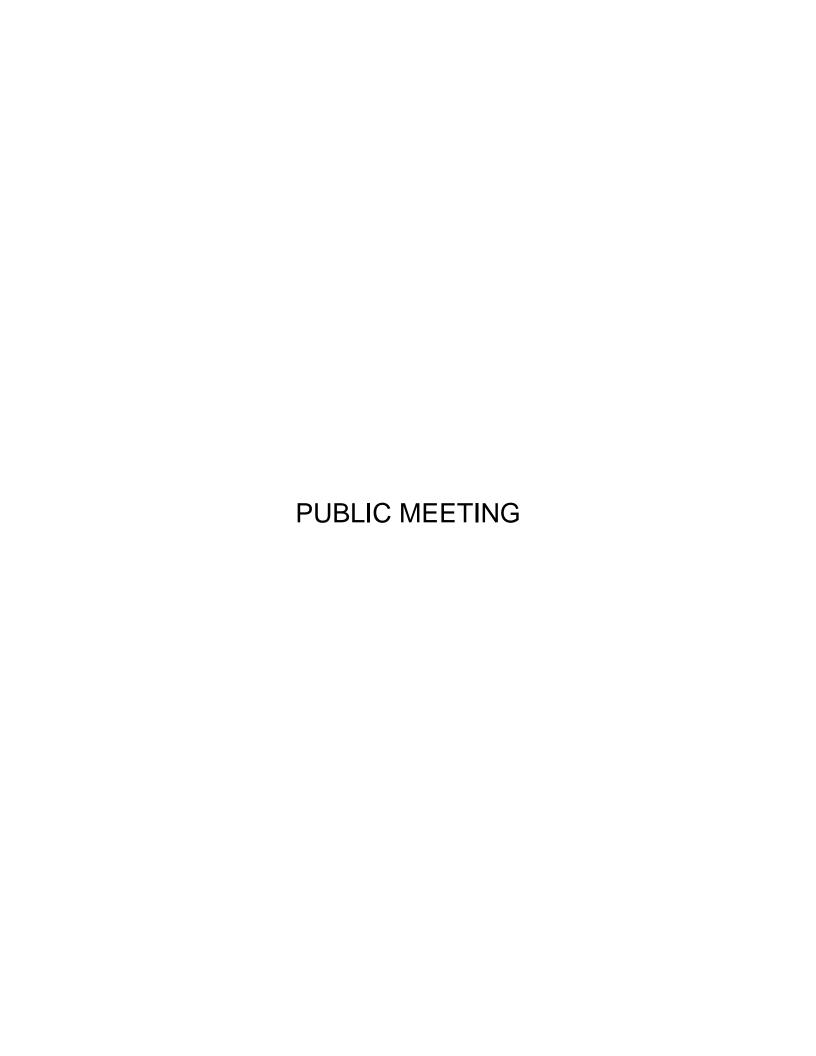
**Improvements to US 181 from Beach Avenue to Morgan Avenue on SH 286** 



### **Harbor Bridge Project History**

- 2001 Harbor Bridge Project initiated
- 2003 Feasibility Study completed
- 2004 Environmental and schematic development initiated
- 2005 First scoping meetings were held
- 2007 Project limits extended and managed/tolled lanes proposed, and a second round of scoping meetings were held
- 2007 The project was put on hold due to lack of funding
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- 2010 FHWA determines project should be developed under new procedures
- 2011 New Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement published
- Tonight is initiation of a new scoping process





#### DATE/TIME:

December 4, 2012; 5:00 – 8:00 p.m.

#### LOCATION:

Solomon Ortiz Center, 1701 S. Padre Island Drive, Corpus Christi, TX 78416

#### **PURPOSE:**

To provide updated information on the proposed project, including the purpose and need for the project and the preliminary schematic drawings for the four proposed build alternatives. The No-Build alternative was also discussed.
 To receive comments on the proposed project in general as well as on the proposed build alternative schematics.

#### **FORMAT:**

The Public Meeting consisted of a one-and-one-half-hour open house followed by a TxDOT presentation and a public comment session. Displays showing four proposed build alternatives and the historic resources survey were available for review and comment. Visualizations of the proposed build alternatives were also on display. Project team members were available to interact with the public, local representatives, and answer questions. Members of the public were given an opportunity to deliver a verbal comment or leave a written comment.

### **PUBLIC NOTICE:**

Public notice of the meeting was published in the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* on November 20 and December 2, 2012, and in the *Portland News* on November 28, 2012. In addition, meeting notices appeared in the *PennySaver* on November 28, 2012; in the *South Texas Catholic* on December 1, 2012; in the *Senior News* on December 1, 2012; and in *El Tejano* on December 1, 2012. Radio spots advertising the meeting were run on Clear Channel Radio stations from November 26 – December 4, 2012. TxDOT also distributed a press release/media advisory and 100 posters advertising the meeting were distributed to 37 community and retail locations in the project area. In addition, a postcard announcing the public meeting was sent to approximately 9000 individuals living in zip codes in the project area and a newsletter that publicized the meeting was sent to the Harbor Bridge mailing list. A meeting notice also was posted on the project website (www.ccharborbridgeproject.com).

### ATTENDANCE:

A total of 139 individuals (five of whom were TxDOT employees) registered their attendance at the public scoping meeting. Ten elected officials or representatives of elected officials signed in as well.

### **DISPLAY AND HANDOUT MATERIALS:**

The following displays were available for viewing: a project location map showing four potential alternatives; maps showing each of the four build alternatives in

more detail; preliminary schematic drawings of the four proposed build alternatives, visualizations of each of the four proposed build alternatives, and two exhibits explaining the historic resource evaluation now underway. A project fact sheet, project location map, and comment card were given to each individual who signed in to the meeting. Additional copies of the Harbor Bridge newsletter were also available.

### PRESENTATION:

Lonnie Gregorcyk, TxDOT Corpus Christi District Engineer, opened the meeting and introduced the project team. He reviewed the Purpose and Need for the project (safety and ongoing maintenance/long-term operation of the bridge), and the process used to reduce the number of proposed alternatives from six to four. The blue and tunnel alternatives were eliminated because they did not meet the safety need for the project.

Mr. Gregorcyk then introduced Christopher Amy, TxDOT Corpus Christi Environmental Coordinator. Mr. Amy reviewed the process involved in developing the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this proposed project. He indicated that TxDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are the co-lead agencies for this project, and that the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the U.S. Coast Guard, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are cooperating agencies.

The Harbor Bridge project team is currently gathering and analyzing data for the environmental impact analysis and is writing the chapters of what eventually will become the EIS document. Mr. Amy noted that part of this process is preparing a Historic Resources Survey Report (identifying potential historic properties in the proposed project area). He pointed out that TxDOT historians were in attendance at the meeting to explain their work and answer questions.

Mr. Amy described the community impact analysis being conducted for the project. Part of this effort involved holding eight neighborhood meetings (listening sessions) in late 2012, as well as a community survey. Over 200 people attended these meetings and provided valuable feedback about their communities and the potential impacts of the proposed project on these communities. All of the information collected from the meetings and surveys will be used in preparing the community impact analysis in the EIS.

Mr. Amy then reviewed the work of the Citizens' Advisory Committee and the Technical Advisory Committee, which met three times in 2012. These committees enable interested individuals and organizations to learn more about the project, to provide input as the project proceeds, and to promote public awareness and understanding of the project. In addition the committees serve as a valuable communication link between TxDOT and the local community.

Mr. Amy then showed several visualizations of what a new bridge might look like in all of the four proposed build alternatives, while stressing that no decision has been yet been made regarding a preferred alternative.

He encouraged those in attendance at the meeting, as well as the larger community, to continue to be engaged in the Harbor Bridge Project. Project team members will be working in Corpus Christi as they gather additional data. The team also will be meeting with various local individuals and groups, and are always available to meet with those who would like more information about the project. In 2013, additional Citizens' Advisory Committee and Technical Advisory Committee meetings will be held, and a Public Design Guideline Workshop will take place later in the year. The workshop will offer community members an opportunity to provide their ideas about the general design and look of the proposed bridge.

### **DEADLINE:**

Comments received and/or postmarked on or before December 18, 2012 were included in this public meeting report.

### **VERBAL COMMENTS DELIVERED AT THE MEETING**

Seven individuals spoke at the scoping meeting. Their comments are summarized below.

**Comment #1** Individual stressed that the North Beach area is very important and suggested that TxDOT consider a ferry from the Solomon Ortiz Center to the north shore.

**TxDOT response:** Comment noted.

**Comment # 2** Individual asked if TxDOT had considered an "elevator" bridge with an adjustable height.

TxDOT response: Comment noted.

**Comment #3** Individual expressed concerns that any of the alternatives would cut off most of the exits to downtown Corpus Christi (including Lipan, Comanche, and Broadway). These are main arteries to the city courthouse and county courthouse.

**TxDOT response:** Accessibility to the downtown area and communities (including North Beach) is extremely important to this project, and is something that is being considered as we develop the project schematics.

**Comment #4:** Individual expressed opposition to the project but if it has to move forward, his preference is for the west alternative. He would like to see the West

Alternative connect to SPID. He believes that the Harbor Bridge is being designed for the people in Gregory, Portland, and Aransas Pass in anticipation of I-69.

**TxDOT response:** Comment noted.

**Comment #5:** Individual expressed a concern that all four proposed alternatives will result in a "choke point" on the north end of North Beach. He asked about TxDOT's philosophy with regard to combining hazardous cargo and normal pedestrian travel. He suggested having on- and off-ramps that would go to the Joe Fulton Trade Corridor from Navigation and that way there would be different ways of getting on the bridge, either from the Joe Fulton or on Beach Ave.

**TxDOT response:** We are looking at ways to minimize or eliminate the situation with truck traffic going onto Joe Fulton mixing with passenger vehicles. This comment will be helpful as we address this situation.

**Comment #6:** Individual voiced a concern about trucks leaving the Joe Fulton Trade Corridor and being directed into the Harbors neighborhood. Three of the neighborhood's cul-de-sacs would no longer have egress from the neighborhood. This is a safety concern. He also expressed a preference for the West Alternative.

TxDOT: Comment noted.

**Comment #7:** Individual had a number of questions. First she asked about the number of people who attended the eight neighborhood meetings in the fall of 2012. Second, she asked for the three reasons why the Blue Alternative was eliminated. Third, she asked about HUD's role in the project. Fourth, she asked a question about a property at Stillman and Van Loan that is on the market for \$125,000 as a commercial property. Her final question was why the Blue Alternative had been eliminated.

**TxDOT response:** Over 200 people attended the neighborhood meetings. The Blue Alternative was eliminated because it did not meet the project's Purpose and Need, specifically the need for safety during a hurricane evacuation (since US 181 is a designated hurricane evacuation route). HUD, along with EPA and the US Coast Guard, are cooperating agencies in developing the Environmental Impact Statement. These agencies review the technical documents and provide review comments as TxDOT and FHWA move through this process. TxDOT is not aware of the particular property referred to by the commenter. The Blue Alternative has been eliminated because it does not meet the Project Purpose and Need.

### **DICTATED COMMENTS**

**Comment # 8:** Individual dictated the following comments to the court reporter:

- Please provide the total budget amount of money that has been spent on this project to date, by category, and the amount of money that is projected by category to be spent. Provide these figures for the community.
- 2. Provide information to people whose properties will be taken. Do not put this on the internet but in a public area.
- 3. Where are the bridge designs?
- 4. Please explain why the Blue Alternative was eliminated.

### **WRITTEN COMMENTS**

No written comments were submitted.





# Texas Department of Transportation Corpus Christi District

U.S. 181 Harbor Bridge Project

Environmental Documentation and Schematic Development

**Public Meeting** 

December 4, 2012



## Today's Agenda

- Welcome and introductions
- What's new with the Harbor Bridge Project?
- Public Involvement How you can participate
- What's next?
- Your comments





# Why do we need to replace Harbor Bridge?

## Need for Harbor Bridge Project

Safety



Long-term bridge operation





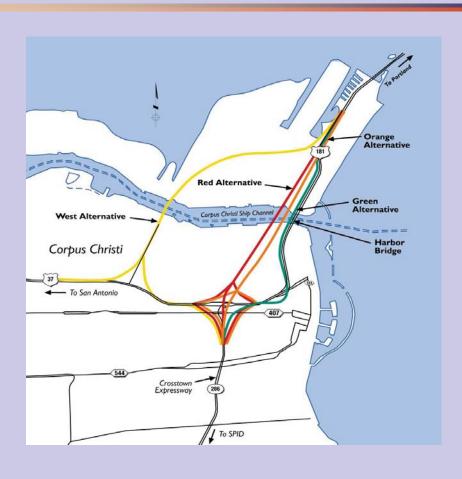
# **Other Project Objectives**

- Economic opportunities
- Connections with local roads





# What's New? Four Reasonable Alternatives





## What's New?

## **Draft Environmental Impact Statement**

- Information gathered in Corpus Christi
- Document now being written
- On-going coordination with:
  - The public
  - Local, State and Federal Agencies (including EPA, HUD, Coast Guard)
- To be completed in 2013



## **Historic Resources**

- Historic Resources Survey now underway
- Assess buildings, structures, districts at least 50 yrs old and historically important.
  - Would proposed project affect them?
  - If so, could this be avoided or made better?
  - Looking for people to be "consulting parties"





# Community Impact Assessment: Neighborhood Meetings

 Listen to community members, show design drawings and latest project information

· Eight so far:

- CC Beach Assn: 9/20

St Paul's: 10/15

Kelsey Memorial: 10/23

Garcia Arts Center: 11/5

Oak Park Elementary: 11/8

Oveal Williams Ctr: 11/8

Portland Community Ctr: 11/12

Dona Park/Academy Heights: 11/13





## **Community Survey**

 Gather information on communities potentially affected by proposed replacement of Harbor Bridge



Complete on paper or online at:

www.ccharborbridgeproject.com

Information used in draft environmental impact statement







# Public Involvement: Citizens' Advisory Committee

- Three meetings in 2012
- 25 + members neighborhood based
- Identified community concerns and ideas
- Suggested public outreach techniques
- Reviewed preliminary design drawings of alternatives





- Three meetings in 2012 change photo
- 25 + members
- Reviewed project information including preliminary design drawings

Provided "big picture" opinions about impacts of proposed projects on

community





## **Public Involvement: Website**

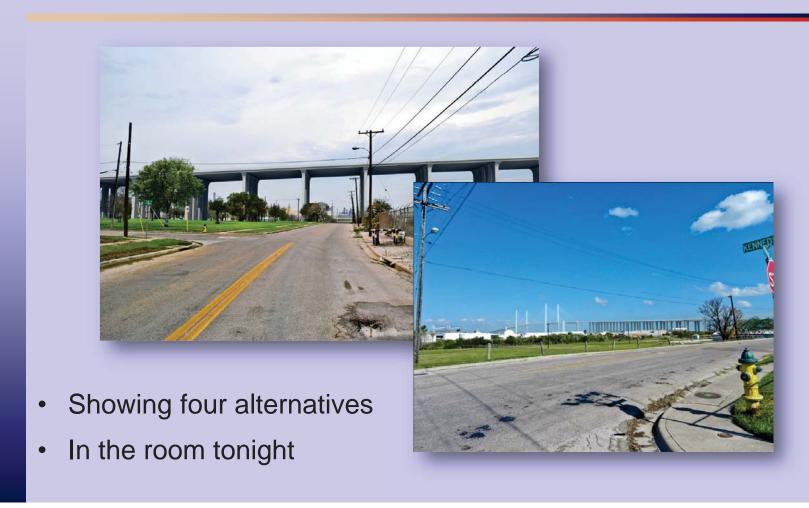


www.ccharborbridgeproject.com

- Updated regularly
- Can leave comments



## **Visualizations**

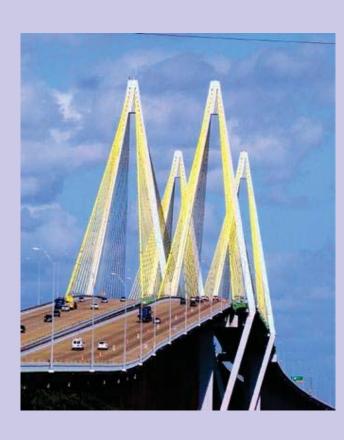




# **Example Cable Stayed Bridge Fred Hartman Bridge**









# **Example Cable Stayed Bridge Visualization (at night)**





## What's Coming up Next?

- Draft Environmental Impact Statement: late 2013
- More meetings with local individuals and groups: any time by request
- CAC and TAC meetings in 2013
- Public Design Guideline Workshop in 2013
- Public Hearing 2014
- Final EIS submitted to TxDOT— 2015
- Record of Decision Anticipated 2015
- Purchase of ROW 2015-2016
- Design and construction 2016 2021





## **Public Comment Session**

- Sign up to speak
- Five minutes per speaker, please
- Additional opportunities to speak, time permitting
- Government officials & pre-registered speakers will go first
- Speakers state name/affiliation and speak clearly



## We want to hear from you

- Record your verbal comment with court reporter
- Fill out a comment card tonight or mail one to us later.
- Make a comment on our website: ccharborbridgeproject.com
- Contact Victor Vourcos of TxDOT (contact information on comment card).
- Thank you for coming tonight.



**Corpus Christi District** 

# What is an Environmental Impact Statement?

- Document required by National Environmental Policy Act for large construction projects that use federal highway funds.
- Discloses project information, describes the project and study areas, and analyzes possible environmental consequences associated with construction.
- Includes public involvement at beginning of EIS development and throughout the process
- Must be approved by the Federal Highway Administration before right-of-way acquisition and construction can begin.

### FACT SHEET

Improvements to US 181 at the Harbor Bridge - Environmental Documentation and Schematic Development

December 2012

### What is the Harbor Bridge Project?

- Proposed improvements to US 181 at the Harbor Bridge over the Corpus Christi Ship Channel
- Project would extend from Beach Ave on US 181 to Morgan Ave on SH 286
- Federal Highway Administration is the lead Federal agency for the project
- TxDOT is the joint lead agency

### **Project Development Phases and Anticipated Timeline**

- Public involvement throughout project
- Feasibility Study: completed in 2003
- Initiate Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) project development with public and agency scoping meetings: 2011
- Consider all project alternatives and compare them to Purpose and Need for Project: 2012
- Move forward with four build alternatives (red, green, orange, and west) plus the No Build alternative: 2012
- Meeting: 2012 We are here
- Identify and evaluate proposed project effects on historical resources and recreational facilities: 2012-2013
- Prepare and review process for draft EIS: 2012 2014
- Hold Citizens' Advisory Committee and Technical Advisory Committee Meetings: 2012 - 2014
- Hold Public (Design Guideline Workshop): 2013
- Hold Public Hearing and recommend a preferred alternative: 2014
- Prepare and review process for Final EIS: 2014 2015
- Environmental Clearance (Record of Decision): anticipated 2015
- Permits and approvals: 2015 2017
- Purchase of right-of-way: 2015 2016
- Design project: 2016: 2017
- Phased construction: 2017 2021

## Stay involved in the Harbor Bridge Project by participating in the following:

- Follow the project online: www.ccharborbridgeproject.com
- Sign up to be on our mailing list (tonight or on the website)
- Attend public meetings and public hearing
- Request a meeting for your group or organization.
- Read our newsletter

### For more information, contact:

TxDOT Project Manager, Victor E. Vourcos at: 361-808-2378
TxDOT Public Information Officer, Rickey Dailey at 361-808-2481

www.ccharborbridgeproject.com

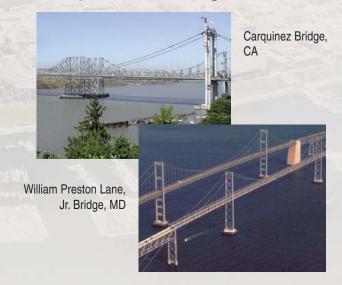


# Harbor Bridge Project: Four Proposed Build Alternatives (in addition to No Build Alternative)

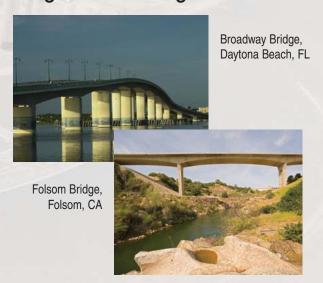


# Potential Bridge Types

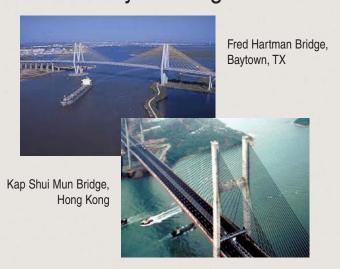
### Suspension Bridges



### Segmental Bridges



## Cable-Stayed Bridges



## HARBOR BRIDGE PROJECT



http://ccharborbridgeproject.com





### **Citizens' Advisory Committee Meeting**

# Harbor Bridge Project Improvements to US 181 at the Harbor Bridge over the Corpus Christi Ship Channel

January 11, 2012 – 6:00 – 8:30 pm Oveal Williams Activity Center, 1414 Martin Luther King Drive, Corpus Christi, TX

#### AGENDA

- Welcome and introductions/explanation of ground rules
- Group discussion of mission of the Citizens' Advisory Committee
- Review/group discussion of Harbor Bridge Project history and current status
- Review/group discussion of project Need and Purpose
- Review/group discussion of project alternatives
- Discussion of alternatives analysis process
- Review of project timeline
- Group discussion of public involvement activities
- Public comments
- Meeting summary and plans for next meeting

Victor E. Vourcos, P.E., Project Manager TxDOT Corpus Christi District 1701 S. Padre Island Drive Corpus Christi, TX 78416

Victor.Vourcos@txdot.gov

www.ccharborbridgeproject.com



# Texas Department of Transportation Corpus Christi District

U.S. 181 Harbor Bridge Project
Environmental Documentation and Schematic
Development

Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting

January 11, 2012



# Welcome

John A. Casey, P.E.

District Engineer

Victor E. Vourcos, P.E.

Harbor Bridge Project Manager

Texas Department of

Transportation

Corpus Christi District Office



## Today's Agenda

- Welcome and introductions
- Explanation of ground rules
- Group discussion of mission of the Citizens' Advisory Committee
- Review/group discussion of Harbor Bridge Project history and current status
- Review/group discussion of project Need and Purpose
- Review/group discussion of project alternatives
- Discussion of alternatives analysis process
- Review of Project Timeline
- Group discussion of public involvement activities



## **CAC Ground Rules**

- Facilitated open discussion among committee members and project team members. Everyone is encouraged to participate.
- To ensure that all committee members have an opportunity to speak, please be respectful of our time limits.
- Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting and will be given an opportunity to provide comments at the end of the meeting.



## **CAC Mission**

- To receive project team reports on the progress of the project in relationship to established schedules and project milestones.
- To promote public awareness and understanding of the project
- To advise TxDOT on the community's preferences regarding the project as well as the best approach for communicating with the public.



# Texas Obepartment Transportation What is the Harbor Bridge Project?

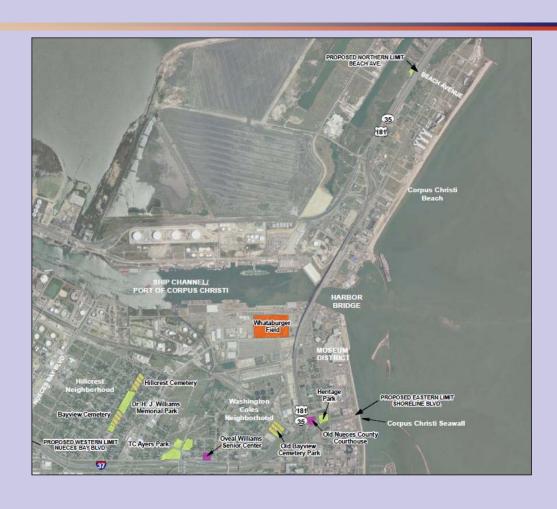
- Proposed improvements to US 181 at the Harbor Bridge over the Corpus Christi Ship Channel.
- Project would extend from Beach Ave on US 181 to Morgan Ave on SH 286



- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is the lead Federal agency for project
- TxDOT is the joint lead agency



# What is the Harbor Bridge Project?





## **Project History and Status**

- 2001 Harbor Bridge Project initiated
- 2003 Feasibility Study completed
- 2004 Environmental and schematic development initiated
- 2005 First scoping meetings held
- 2007 Project limits extended and second round of scoping meetings held



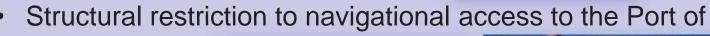
## **Project History and Status**

- 2007 The project put on hold due to lack of funding
- 2009 Project reinitiated with new project limits
- 2010 FHWA determined project should be developed under SAFTEA-LU
- 2011 New Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS published



## **Need for Harbor Bridge Project**

- Additional details were incorporated into the Need
- Safety Risks (Including Hurricane Evacuation)
  - Lack of shoulders
  - Steep vertical grades
  - Sharp horizontal curves
  - Non-standard ramp lengths and spacing



Corpus Christi







## **Need for Harbor Bridge Project**

- Increased difficulty in maintaining the structure's operability over the long-term
- Limited connection to local roadways
- Limited capacity to meet future traffic demands







## Purpose of the Harbor Bridge Project

- Mitigate geometric deficiencies for the highway, including the Harbor Bridge (reduce sharp curves and steep grades) to improve safety for the travelling public including during hurricane evacuations
- Reduce the structural restriction to navigational access at the Port of Corpus Christi (raise the bridge height), thereby promoting expansion and economic opportunity in the area
- Maximize the long-term operation of the Harbor Bridge structure
- Improve the connectivity to the local roadway system
- Meet current standards for capacity on US 181, including the Harbor Bridge, considering projected future traffic demand



### **Alternatives Under Consideration**

Feasibility Study and Scoping Process – Six build alternatives (plus the No Build) are being

considered:

Red Alternative

- Orange Alternative
- Green Alternative
- Blue Alternative
- Tunnel Alternative\*
- West Alternative\*



\*new alternatives from 1st Scoping Meeting



# US 181 Harbor Bridge Location Map





# **Summary of Preliminary Environmental Constraints**

US 181 – Preliminary Considerations								
Constraints		Alternative Constraints						
		No Build	Red	Orange	Green	Blue	West	Tunnel
Environmental	Environmental Justice neighborhoods		Х	X	Х	X	Х	х
	Wetlands, Ecology, and Threatened and Endangered Species					X	X	
	Hazardous materials		Х	Х	Х		Х	Х
	Historic Resources		Х	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х
Right-of Way	Substantial Right-Of-Way		Х	Х		X	X	
	Impacts to Parks or Recreational Areas		X	×		х		
	Impacts to Major Existing or Planned Developments		X	X	Х	Х	Х	Х
Engineering	Safety Considerations	Х			Х	Х		Х
	Design Standards	Х			Х			Х



# Texas Alternatives Analysis Methodology

- Methodology Further Developed
  - Measures of Effectiveness (MOEs) developed to evaluate whether a particular alternative meets the Need & Purpose
    - Each alternative will be evaluated against the Measures of Effectiveness
    - Alternatives may be eliminated from further evaluation if it is determined they do not satisfy the MOEs, and therefore the need and purpose of the proposed project
  - Alternatives that meet the Need & Purpose will be evaluated further



### **Coordination Plan**

- A Coordination Plan facilitates and documents TxDOT's and FHWA's interaction with the public and agencies
- Encourages public/agency input to develop the Need & Purpose, Project Build Alternatives and methodology
- Revised Draft Coordination Plan available on our website



## **Harbor Bridge Timeline**

# Prepare Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) followed by Final EIS and Record of Decision (ROD)

- Initiate project development with scoping meetings 2011
- Develop alternatives and begin agency coordination 2012
- Public Meeting 2012 2013
- Prepare and review draft environmental document 2012 2014
- Public Meeting Design Guideline Workshop 2013
- Public Hearing 2014 2015
- Prepare and review final EIS 2014 2016
- Public involvement throughout process



## **Harbor Bridge Timeline**

- Environmental Clearance ROD issued 2016 or as early as 2014
  - Considering Condensed FEIS
- Obtain permits and approvals 2015 2017
- Prepare ROW Map and Acquire ROW 2015 2017
- Develop construction plans 2015 2017
- Start phase construction 2017 2020





### **Public Involvement Activities**

- Public scoping meetings
- Public meetings
- CAC and TAC meetings
- Project website
- Neighborhood/small group informal meetings
- Newsletters
- Project Timeline
- Others? Your ideas requested.



# Public Involvement Opportunities to Share with Community

# Stay involved in the Harbor Bridge Project by participating in the following:

- Follow the project online:
- Sign up to be on our mailing list
- Attend public meetings and public hearing
- Participate in small stakeholder meetings
- Read our newsletter
- Contact TxDOT Project Manager or Public Information Officer
  - Victor E. Vourcos, P.E. Phone: 361.808.2378
     Victor.Vourcos@txdot.gov
  - Tom Tagliabue Phone 361.808.2481 Tom.tagliabue@txdot.gov



# **Public Comments**



# **Meeting Summary**

- Parking lot items
- Ideas for next meeting
- Thank you for your participation



#### **Citizens' Advisory Committee Meeting**

Harbor Bridge Project
Improvements to US 181 at the Harbor Bridge over the Corpus Christi Ship
Channel

January 11, 2012 – 6:00 – 8:30 pm Oveal Williams Activity Center, 1414 Martin Luther King Drive, Corpus Christi, TX

#### **Meeting Summary**

#### Introductions

John Casey, TxDOT Corpus Christi District Engineer welcomed the members of the CAC to the meeting. He introduced himself and invited all committee members to introduce themselves and explain what they hoped to get out of CAC membership. As they introduced themselves, CAC members voiced support for a new bridge; expressed concerns about the tunnel alternative; expressed a desire for all communities to be protected and included in the project; explained that a new bridge would be beneficial to the community; and indicated that they were ready for the project to move forward as quickly as possible.

#### Mission of the Citizens' Advisory Committee

Nancy Gates, meeting facilitator, reviewed the proposed mission of the CAC:

- To receive project team reports on the progress of the project in relationship to established schedules and project milestones.
- To promote public awareness and understanding of the project
- To advise TxDOT on the community's preferences regarding the project as well as the best approach for communicating with the public.

CAC members agreed with this mission.

#### **Harbor Bridge Project History and Current Status**

Victor Vourcos, with the TxDOT Corpus Christi District and project manager for the Harbor Bridge Project gave a quick review of the project, which consists of proposed improvements to US 181 at the Harbor Bridge over the Corpus Christi Ship Channel. The project would extend from Beach Ave (at US 181) on the north to Morgan Ave. on SH 286 on the south, so it would include both the bridge itself as well as the associated approaches. The lead federal agency for the project is the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and TxDOT is co-lead. These two agencies will be working together throughout the project.



Mr. Vourcos explained that TxDOT began the Harbor Bridge Project in 2001 and completed the Feasibility Study in 2003. In 2004, they began their initial environmental process and schematic development (conceptual designs for a bridge replacement), which included CAC meetings. In 2007, FHWA and TxDOT decided to extend the project limits to allow for the future addition of what are called managed (tolled) lanes across the bridge and continuing on SH 286. Because of this change in project limits, TxDOT held a new round of scoping meetings that year. In 2007, TxDOT unfortunately had to put the Harbor Bridge on hold because of a lack of funding. Two years later, in 2009, they were able to reinitiate the project. At that time, TxDOT's administration decided that the managed lanes would no longer be included and therefore the project limits could go back to the original project limits as proposed in 2005. In 2010, FHWA determined that the project should be developed using new regulatory procedures that have come into effect since the project first began.

In June and July of 2011, TxDOT published a Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). This was the first legal step in beginning the EIS process. Public and agency scoping meetings were held to gather input on the possible project alternatives in August and October 2011.

During this portion of the meeting, CAC members asked about project progress and whether TxDOT was starting all over again with the EIS. TxDOT indicated that a new Notice of Intent for the Harbor Bridge Project was filed last summer, which signifies the beginning of the environmental study process. During the time that the project was temporarily stopped due to funding shortages, federal regulations regarding the NEPA process changed. Therefore, TxDOT took another look at the alternatives as it restarted the NEPA process for Harbor Bridge. FHWA and TxDOT concluded that four alternatives would be considered during the scoping process: the red, orange, blue, and green alternatives. Some of the previous work completed for the EIS before the project was put on hold will be used where appropriate. One CAC member asked about acquisition of right-of-way for a bridge replacement. TxDOT responded that anyone who might be impacted by the project would be notified well in advance; however, it is too early in the process to make any decisions about possible right-of-way acquisition since TxDOT is currently undertaking the alternatives analysis process.

#### Review/Group Discussion of Project Need and Purpose

Mr. Vourcos then reviewed the need for the project, which includes safety (e.g., the existing bridge's lack of shoulders, steep vertical slope, challenging roadway approaches); enhanced navigation and economic development of the Port of Corpus Christi (current vertical clearance is a deterrent to larger vessels); increased difficulty in maintaining the structure over the long-term (rising maintenance costs); limited connection to local roadways; and the existing bridge's limited ability to meet future traffic demands. The purpose of the project corresponds to these needs: correcting the sharp curves and steep grades to improve safety, raising the bridge height to improve ship access to the Port of Corpus Christi, maximizing the long-term operation of the



Harbor Bridge structure, improving connectivity between the bridge/US 181 and the local roads, and providing adequate capacity on US 181 to meet projected future traffic.

The general public and the cooperating and participating agencies have had an opportunity to comment on this project Need and Purpose, as has the CAC.

#### Review/Group Discussion of Project Alternatives

Mr. Vourcos explained that there are currently six build alternatives plus the no build (leaving the existing bridge in place) under consideration, as shown on the Harbor Bridge location map that was distributed to each CAC member. These alternatives are the red, orange, green, blue, tunnel, and west alternatives. The tunnel and west alternatives were proposed during the public and agency scoping process in 2011.

#### **Discussion of Alternatives Analysis Process**

Matt Thompson gave the group an overview of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) that governs the way agencies such as TxDOT perform environmental impact studies. These studies are required for any major project that uses federal money and could significantly affect the quality of the human environment. NEPA requires agencies to assess the environmental effects of their proposed actions before they make any decisions. The environmental review process includes extensive public involvement.

As Mr. Thompson explained, the EIS process begins with publication of a Notice of Intent, stating the agency's intent to prepare an EIS for a particular project. TxDOT published this Notice of Intent in the summer of 2011 in the *Federal Register* and in the *Corpus-Christi Caller Times*. When the Notice of Intent was published, it provided information on the first public and agency scoping meeting, which took place in August. The scoping process is used to gather input on possible project alternatives, issues, and alternatives, as well as to get feedback on the project Need and Purpose and the project Coordination Plan. A second set of public and agency scoping meetings were held in October 2011and two new alternatives suggested during the scoping process were identified (the west and tunnel alternatives).

Mr. Thompson explained that TxDOT's analysis of project alternatives will begin with evaluating each alternative to determine whether it meets the project Need and Purpose. To perform this analysis, TxDOT and FHWA have worked together to develop criteria by which each alternative can be measured to determine if it meets each of the elements of the Need and Purpose. These criteria are called the Measures of Effectiveness (MOEs). If an alternative does not meet the Need and Purpose, it will be eliminated from further evaluation. Alternatives that meet the Need and Purpose will be evaluated further during the EIS process. According to NEPA, the EIS must "objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives, and for alternatives which were eliminated from detailed study, briefly discuss the reasons for their having been eliminated."



One CAC member noted that the overall impact to the community is critical and wondered if the cost of an alternative was a consideration. TxDOT responded that they are working on a cost comparison of all options. Another member asked about the total cost of the entire constructed project. TxDOT indicated that they have not yet defined the cost of each alternative but currently estimate the final cost of the project to be between \$600 million and \$1 billion.

A CAC member noted that it will be important during decision making to determine the effects, both positive and negative, of an alternative on nearby neighborhoods and that 3-D modeling would be very helpful in helping people visualize the impact the project will have on their community.

#### **Group Discussion of Public Involvement Activities**

Nancy Gates reviewed the planned public involvement activities for the Harbor Bridge Project and explained that public involvement is a key component of the project because public input is needed throughout the environmental documentation and schematic development process.

She noted that TxDOT has already held two public (and agency) scoping meetings (2011), and has considered all input received during those meetings including suggestions for two additional alternatives to be studied. The project Coordination Plan has also been revised based on comments from agencies and the public.

The CAC and Technical Advisory Groups have been formed and are holding their first meetings today (January 11, 2012). TxDOT also is available to meet with small neighborhood groups or organizations as requested. The project website (ccharborbridgeproject.com) is active and being updated as new information becomes available. A project newsletter will be mailed quarterly and also will be available on line.

Ms. Gates then posed the following questions to the CAC:

- How can we do a better job of reaching out to the community?
- Where should we meet with people?
- Are there people that we should contact or events in which we should participate?

CAC members had various suggestions for reaching out to the community during the EIS process. These suggestions included conducting a door-to-door survey, distributing meeting minutes, making maps available at Miller High School, distributing information on the project as an insert to a utility bill, running public service announcements on radio or TV, and running information in the Thrifty Nickel or the Ad Sack. Other suggestions included using social media to reach the younger generation and creating a visualization to allow the public to visualize the proposed project conceptually. One individual suggested putting project maps at the Oveal Williams Center.



#### Followup to the CAC Meeting

#### Future CAC Meeting Times/Locations

Most CAC members seemed to think that meeting at the Oveal Williams Center was appropriate. Other possible meeting locations could be somewhere in Dona Park, St. Theresa's, or at another location where people might be most impacted by the project. John Casey indicated that the meeting could remain at Oveal Williams or could be rotated to various locations in the project area.

A CAC member noted that Wednesday evening is not a good time if clergy members are expected to attend. Monday evening is probably not a good night as well. The current meeting time, however, is fine with the CAC.

#### Other Requests

One CAC member requested that copies of letters and communication with the EJ community be sent to the entire CAC. Several other members asked that they receive regular updates on the progress of the project.

In response to a CAC member's request, TxDOT will send a link to the Feasibility Study on the Harbor Bridge website. If a member does not wish to or cannot access the website, TxDOT will send an electronic or hardcopy version of the study.

#### **Public comments**

No public comments were received.



#### **Citizens' Advisory Committee Meeting**

# Harbor Bridge Project Improvements to US 181 at the Harbor Bridge over the Corpus Christi Ship Channel

June 21, 2012 – 6:00 – 8:30 pm Oveal Williams Activity Center, 1414 Martin Luther King Drive, Corpus Christi, TX

#### **AGENDA**

- Welcome and introductions
- Review of ground rules and CAC mission
- Review/group discussion of project Need and Purpose
- Review/group discussion of project alternatives analysis
- Review/group discussion of Harbor Bridge Project status
- Review/group discussion of community impact analysis activities
- Group discussion of public outreach activities including next public meeting
- · Public comments
- Meeting summary and plans for next meeting.

Victor E. Vourcos, P.E., Project Manager TxDOT Corpus Christi District 1701 S. Padre Island Drive Corpus Christi, TX 78416

Victor.Vourcos@txdot.gov

www.ccharborbridgeproject.com



#### **Citizens' Advisory Committee Meeting**

#### Harbor Bridge Project Improvements to US 181 at the Harbor Bridge over the Corpus Christi Ship Channel

June 21, 2012 - 6:00 - 8:30 pm

Julie 2	1, 2012 – 6.00 – 6.30 pm							
	Questionnaire							
Name:								
Address:								
(To mail, please fold in half with this page on	the inside and affix a postage stamp. Please	e tape closed; do not						
staple. Or you may fax this form to Victor Vou		,						
1.) Where is your community, and w names)?	hat are the boundaries of your nei	ghborhood (street						
2.) What are the important places (churches, playgrounds, historic buildings) in your community and where are they located?								
3.) What organizations do you participate in that might be interested in meeting with TxDOT to learn more about the Harbor Bridge project?								
Organization	Contact Person	Phone #						



# Texas Department of Transportation Corpus Christi District

U.S. 181 Harbor Bridge Project

Environmental Documentation and Schematic Development

Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting

June 21,2012



# Welcome

District Engineer

Victor E. Vourcos, P.E.

Harbor Bridge Project Manager

Texas Department of Transportation

Corpus Christi District Office



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# What is the Harbor Bridge Project?

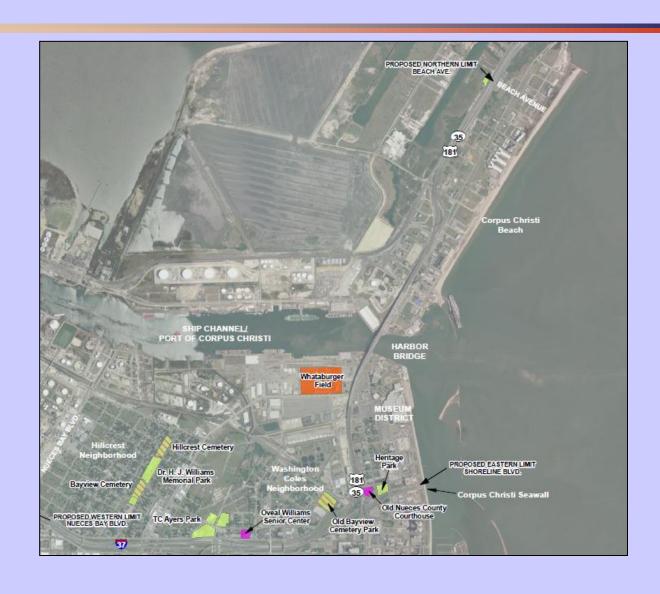
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- Project would extend from Beach Ave on US 181 to Morgan Ave on SH 286



- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is the lead Federal agency for project
- TxDOT is the joint lead agency



# What is the Harbor Bridge Project?





# **Project Timeline**

Feasibility Study complete - 2003

2011 – New NOI published

2011-2012 Scoping Process

First CAC meeting - 2012

Purpose & Need Finalized - 2012

2012 - Alternatives analysis begins



# Purpose and Need for Harbor Bridge Project

- Clear, well-justified purpose and need explains that expenditure of funds is necessary and worthwhile, and why impacts are acceptable based on project's importance.
- Purpose and need drives process for alternatives consideration, in-depth analysis, and ultimate selection.





# **Need for Harbor Bridge Project**

### To maintain long-term operation of the Harbor Bridge

- Corrosion of bridge steel and continued deterioration
- Harbor Bridge is "fracture critical"
- Increased difficulty and costs associated with maintaining

the structure over the long-term





# **Need for Harbor Bridge Project**

### To minimize safety risks caused by design deficiencies

- Lack of shoulders on Harbor Bridge/US 181
- Steep grade on bridge and "s" curves on north/south ends of bridge
- US 181 southbound (south of bridge) does not meet current design standards
- Ramp lengths do not providing adequate acceleration/deceleration space
- Hurricane evacuation routes are prone congestion



## **Objectives of the Harbor Bridge Project**

- Objectives fall under Project Needs
  - Used to evaluate alternatives during EIS process
  - Provide transportation infrastructure to expand economic opportunity
  - Consider connection between the bridge/US 181 and local roadways
  - Consider ability to meet future traffic demands on US 181





### **Alternatives Under Consideration**

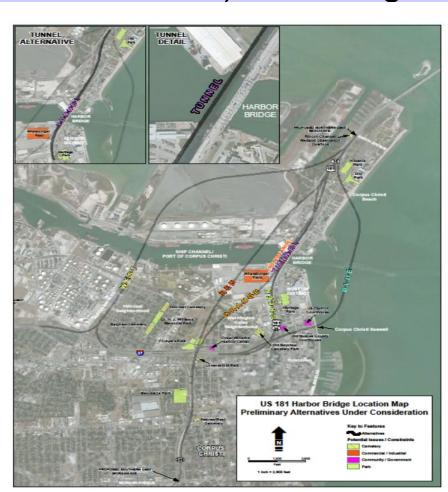
Six build alternatives (plus the No Build) are being

considered:

Red Alternative

- Orange Alternative
- Green Alternative
- Blue Alternative
- Tunnel Alternative\*
- West Alternative\*

\*new alternatives from 1st Scoping Meeting





## **Scoping Process Now Complete**

- TxDOT/FHWA have refined Purpose and Need
- Six alternatives have been evaluated to see if they meet Purpose and Need
- Four reasonable alternatives (plus the no-build) will be carried forward for analysis in the EIS



# Harbor Bridge Project Reasonable Alternatives





## Harbor Bridge Project Reasonable Alternatives

- Tunnel alternative eliminated from further consideration because:
  - It did not meet the safety need for the project
    - Does not meet TxDOT's standard for appropriate hurricane evacuation routes for the Corpus Christi Area
- Blue alternative eliminated from further consideration because:
  - It did not meet the safety need for the project
    - Does not meet TxDOT's standard for appropriate hurricane evacuation routes for the Corpus Christi Area



# Status of Harbor Bridge Project Activities

## **Environmental Impact Statement underway: What would be affected if we build this project?**

#### Data collection taking place for potential impacts to:

- Land use
- Ecology
- Socioeconomics of project area
- Neighborhoods and communities
- Air quality
- Hazardous materials
- Historic resources
- Impacts to parks or recreational areas
- Impacts to major existing or planned developments



## **Community Impact Assessment**

- What effect would proposed project have on local communities?
- Important aspect of EIS analysis
- Process for evaluating the effects of proposed transportation projects on a community and the quality of life.



## **Community Impact Assessment**

- Planned activities for assessing community impact in project area
  - Outreach plan for interacting with community groups and individuals
  - Evaluation of census and other socioeconomic data
  - Questionnaires
  - Small group meetings in neighborhood locations this summer and fall
  - Your input is important for addressing community concerns and issues



# Coming Up Next on Harbor Bridge Project

# Prepare Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) followed by Final EIS and Record of Decision (ROD)

- CAC and Technical Advisory Group (TAC) meetings 2012 2014
- Public Meeting 2012
- Prepare and review draft environmental document 2012 2014
- Public Meeting Design Guideline Workshop 2013
- Public Hearing 2014 2015
- Prepare and review final EIS 2014 2016
- Public involvement throughout process



### **Public Involvement Activities**

- Public meetings
- CAC and TAC meetings
- Project website
- Newsletters
- Neighborhood/small group informal meetings
- Others? Your ideas requested.





# Public Involvement Opportunities to Share with Community

## Stay involved in the Harbor Bridge Project by participating in the following:

- Follow the project online:
- Sign up to be on our mailing list
- Attend public meetings and public hearing
- Participate in small stakeholder meetings
- Read our newsletter
- Contact TxDOT Project Manager or Public Information Officer
  - Victor E. Vourcos, P.E. Phone: 361.808.2378
     Victor.Vourcos@txdot.gov
  - Public Information. Phone 361.808.2481



## **Public Comments**



## **Meeting Summary**

- Parking lot items
- Topics/information needs for next meeting?
- Meeting times/locations?

Thank you for your participation



#### **Citizens' Advisory Committee Meeting**

Harbor Bridge Replacement Project
US 181 at the Harbor Bridge Replacement Project
Over the Corpus Christi Ship Channel

June 21, 2012 – 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm Oveal Williams Activity Center, 1414 Martin Luther King Drive, Corpus Christi, TX

#### **Meeting Summary**

#### **Display Items**

- 1. Land Use Maps on an aerial photo background showing land use information and preliminary right of way lines for four reasonable alternatives.
- 2. The Project Location Map showing each of the four reasonable alternatives.

#### Welcome and introductions

Victor Vourcos, TxDOT project manager for the Harbor Bridge Project, opened the Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting and welcomed participants and asked each member to introduce themselves. He introduced the project team and then introduced the meeting facilitator, Susan Springer.

Ms. Springer reviewed the CAC mission (accepted by the CAC at the January 2012 meeting) and meeting ground rules. She reiterated that the meeting was intended to be a conversation rather than a presentation, and that TxDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) consider the CAC to be an important link with the community and conduit for information exchange. CAC members voiced no objections to the mission and ground rules of the committee. Susan then turned the meeting over to Mr. Vourcos, who began the technical presentation.

#### Review/group Discussion of Project Need and Purpose

Mr. Vourcos briefly reviewed the project background especially for new CAC members. He explained the project history and quick overview of the current status of the project.

Mr. Vourcos then explained to the group that the project Purpose and Need has been refined since the last meeting to reflect input from the public as well as FHWA and TxDOT. Mr. Vourcos explained that the project Purpose and Need explains why expenditure of funds is necessary and why impacts are acceptable based on the project's importance. The Purpose and Need is used to evaluate possible alternatives and ultimately make a selection of a preferred alternative.

The two needs for the project are:

- To maintain long-term operation of the Harbor Bridge
- To minimize safety risks caused by design deficiencies.

The first need is related to the fact that the Harbor Bridge is prone to corrosion (as a steel bridge over salt water) and is experiencing continued deterioration. The bridge is fracture critical, which means that the key structural elements supporting the bridge are not themselves supported by additional and redundant elements. Although this does not mean that the bridge is inherently unsafe, there is no second line of protection should one of these elements fail. Maintaining the Harbor Bridge over the next 30-45 years will require not only millions of dollars but also periods of time when the bridge would have to be closed to traffic.

The other need addresses the safety risks caused by design deficiencies on the bridge and its approaches. The current bridge does not meet current FHWA and TxDOT roadway and bridge design standards because of its lack of shoulders, steep grades on the bridge and sharp "s" curves on the north and south ends of the bridge, inadequate ramp lengths for acceleration/deceleration, all of which serve to reduce capacity and efficiency during a hurricane evacuation.

In addition to these project needs, Mr. Vourcos explained that there are three project objectives that will be used to evaluate project alternatives. These objectives have a lower level of importance during the evaluation process:

- Provide transportation infrastructure to expand economic opportunity
- Consider connection between the bridge/US 181 and local roadways
- Consider ability to meet future traffic demands on US 181.

#### **CAC Member Comments and Questions:**

- Question: Is this process always followed for projects or is this process only for Harbor Bridge?
  - Response: TxDOT must follow the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). In this case, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared since the Harbor Bridge project is complex. There is much less documentation required for smaller projects.
- Question: What is the purpose?
   Response: The purpose is how the project will resolve each of the two needs that were discussed above.
- Question: What happened to the bridge height need?
   Response: It is now an objective (See the first bullet under the objectives above).
- Question: Why did the needs for the project change?
   Response: TxDOT and FHWA wanted to focus on the two most critical needs.
   The three objectives are also important but not the reason for the improvements.
- Comment: Billy Packer (contractor, Dona Park). I don't think they would have built the Water Park right there if the Green Alternative was a real choice. I don't think we want a bridge/highway that turns sharply. The West Alternative has a big swinging curve that was just pointed out as a safety issue. The Red Alternative is it and that's wonderful.
- Question: Can we still add an objective? I suggest that we add as an objective
  that the project be [as neighborhood friendly] as possible. Sensitivity to
  neighborhoods should be a priority; make quality a priority.
  - Response: Process is always subject to change and we will consider it.

#### Review/group discussion of project alternatives analysis

Mr. Vourcos next summarized the process of how TxDOT has analyzed the six possible alternatives for the bridge (in addition to the no-build alternative). As of the January, 2012 CAC meeting, six alternatives were being considered: the red, orange, green, blue, west, and tunnel. Two of these alternatives (west and tunnel) had been suggested during the public scoping process that took place last summer and fall.

During the alternatives screening process, TxDOT compared each of these alternatives to the two project needs, which resulted in two of the alternatives being dropped from further consideration. The Blue and Tunnel alternatives were both eliminated because they do not meet the safety need for the project. In both cases, they do not meet TxDOT's standard for appropriate hurricane evacuation routes for the Corpus Christi area. In the case of the Tunnel Alternative, redundant pumping systems would be needed in the event of flooding during a storm surge. The blue Alternative would result in another causeway that could become impassable in the event of a storm surge.

#### CAC members had the following questions/comments:

- Question: Is the Red Alternative already the chosen one?
   Response: No, TxDOT is required to follow the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and evaluate all alternatives equally in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.
- Question: What is the "no-build" alternative?
   Response: The "no-build is the baseline against which all the build alternatives will be compared. It is the existing condition which does include maintenance but no improvements. It is also required by NEPA.
- Question: Does no-build alternative include addressing the "fracture critical" issue?
  - Response: No, it does not address those types of issues since that would require improvements beyond maintenance.
- Question: When will the draft EIS be completed?
   Response: At this time, we anticipate that it will be completed in 2013

- Question: Was TC Ayers Park closed because of this project?
  Response: No, the City's decision was based on funding of under-utilized parks.
  The Director of Parks and Recreation stated that it has been closed for about three years due to lack of use. The City Council will make the final determination on the parks selected for closing in August. TC Ayers Park could remain a recreational facility if the City can find someone to pay for maintenance and upkeep.
- Question: What opportunities are there for the public to comment?
   Response: There will be a public comment period at the end of the CAC and TAC meetings, also during the public meetings as well as during the public hearing. Following the public meetings and the public hearing, written comments can be submitted as part of the project record.

#### Review/group discussion of Harbor Bridge Project status

Mr. Eddie Sutherland told the group that the scoping process for the Harbor Bridge project is now complete. The environmental analysis portion of the project is underway. Data is now being collected for potential impacts to land use, socioeconomics of the project area, neighborhoods, air quality, hazardous materials, historic resources, parks and recreational areas, and major existing or planned developments.

#### Review/group discussion of community impact analysis activities

Mr. Sutherland reviewed the community impact assessment that will be taking place beginning later this summer. This assessment looks at the effect of the proposed project on local communities and is part of the EIS analysis process. Planned activities for this assessment include an outreach plan for reaching as many community groups and individuals as possible, evaluation of census and other socioeconomic data, questionnaires, and small group "listening sessions" in various neighborhood locations.

#### **Group discussion of public outreach activities**

Ms. Nancy Gates reviewed public involvement activities taking place on the Harbor Bridge project and urged the CAC members to share information with the community and encourage them to get involved in the project. The next public meeting is anticipated to be held in the late fall of 2012 or early winter of 2013. The Harbor Bridge website will be updated continuously and a newsletter will be coming out this summer. Any ideas about reaching out to the public are welcomed.

## Discussion by CAC members of the best way to collect data from the neighborhoods (Bulleted items were questions/comments from the CAC members):

- Question: How will data be collected, especially for community impacts?
   Response: During the development of the Community Impact Assessment that is part of EIS. Will include neighborhood outreach plan, census data, questionnaire.
- Question: How will this data collection be done? Door to door? A lot of people
  can't come out to meetings. The Local Emergency Planning Committee (City of
  Corpus Christi) held meetings and turnout was not what they wanted.
- Comment: Need to educate people about the project or they won't see how it affects them. Public Service Announcements on radio and TV.
- Comment: Consider allocation of resources relative to different areas [equity], some people are more vocal populations, others can end up being underrepresented.

**Question for CAC members from the facilitator**: What is the best way to reach people?

Responses:

Postings at laundry mats,

Meals on wheels packets,

Flyers at Food pantries,

Radio spots,

HEB bulletin boards,

RTA Buses,

Flyers in utility bills,

Penny Saver,

Thrifty Nickel,
Sr. Citizens Paper,
El Tejano,
Catholic Diocese Paper,
English and Spanish, billboards.

#### **Public comments and questions:**

 Comment: All this was discussed last time. Let's move forward. What have you been doing since January?

Response: TxDOT noted the revisions to Purpose and Need and confirmed the four reasonable alternatives and prepared an EJ work plan.

- Question: Can we review the EJ work plan?
   Response: The EJ work plan is an internal document still under review by agencies.
- Comment: If people are walking out without [new] info they won't come back.
   Tell us what you're going to do, don't just hold meetings. We know we need a new bridge, but what are the effects?
- Question: What are the anticipated effects on the North Beach residents, what is
  the access going to be coming off the bridge?
   Response: When the preliminary schematics are finished they will show access,
  traffic movements. That information will be available at the next meeting.
- Comment: Visualizations would be good. Now it's too abstract. Share more info on design process. Provide pros and cons of alternatives – bullets.
- Question: What is the schedule for design work on the build alternatives?
   Response: TxDOT will have preliminary schematics by this fall. At next CAC meeting and the public meeting, the schematics for all four build alternatives will be laid out, showing the proposed right-of-way.
- Comment: Need to share costs as well. For example, the Blue Alternative would be very costly. Is one of the alternatives two or three times more expensive than any other alternative? The members are looking for a snapshot of the impacts.
   Response: Reminder that the Blue Alternative has been eliminated.

- Comment: The bridge should be beautiful; need to consider tourist traffic during construction.
- Question: Why is West so close to refineries?
   Response: The West Alternative was suggested by the public during the formal scoping process in 2011.
- Comment: Some members may be willing to meet more often if meetings could be shorter.
- Comment: From the Citizens for Environmental Justice perspective, all
  alternatives are equally negative and affect communities along refinery row. The
  people who already bear more of the environmental burden will be affected.

#### Meeting summary and plans for next meeting

The next CAC meeting will be held in the fall of 2012. CAC members requested additional information on the alternatives (along with ROW) and that information will be shared at this meeting.



Victor E. Vourcos, P.E., Project Manager TxDOT Corpus Christi District 1701 S. Padre Island Drive Corpus Christi, TX 78416

RE: Harbor Bridge Project

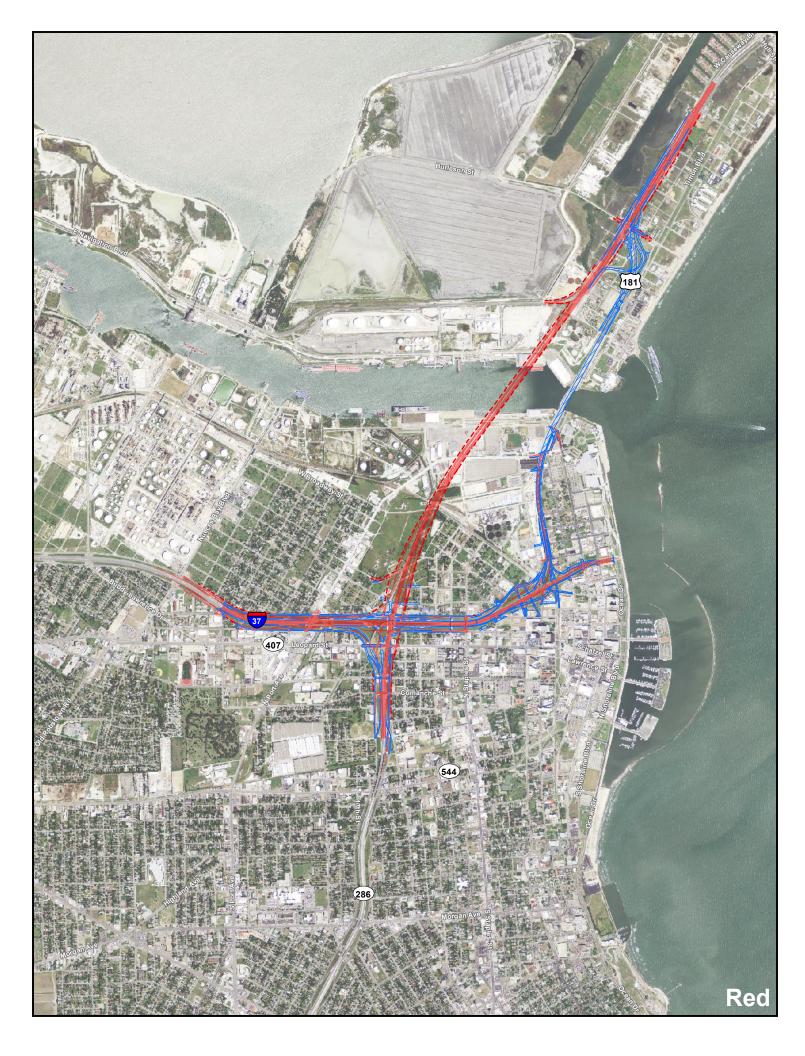


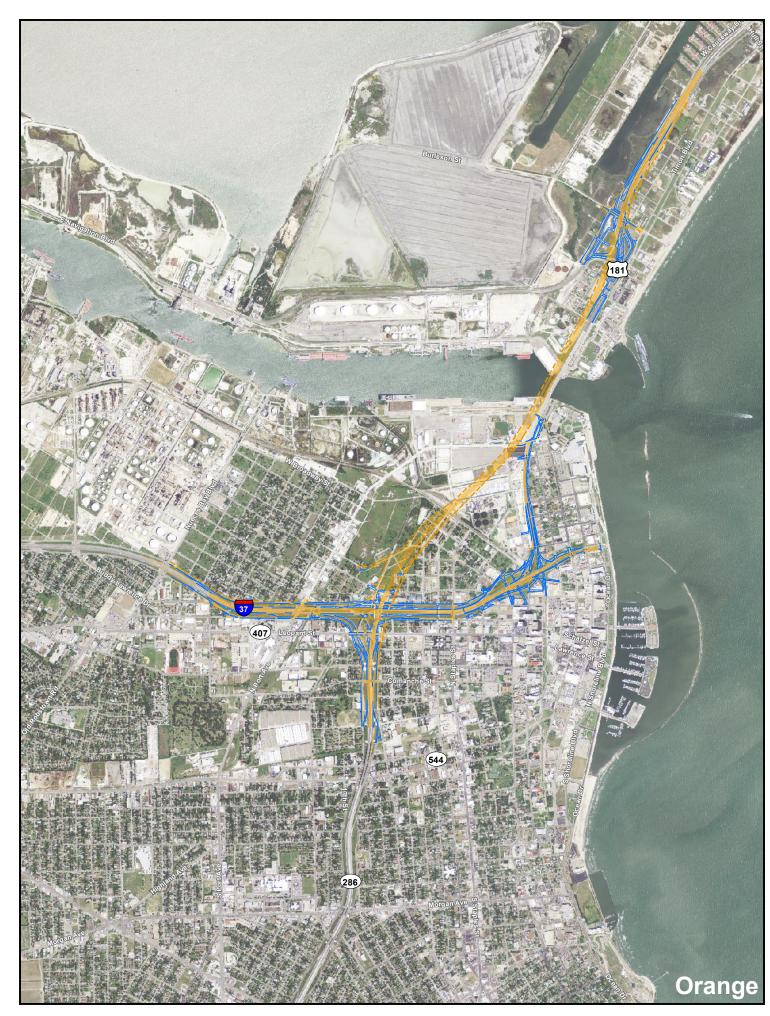
## Harbor Bridge Citizens' Advisory Committee Meeting July 11, 2013, 6-8 p.m. at the Oveal Williams Senior Activity Center

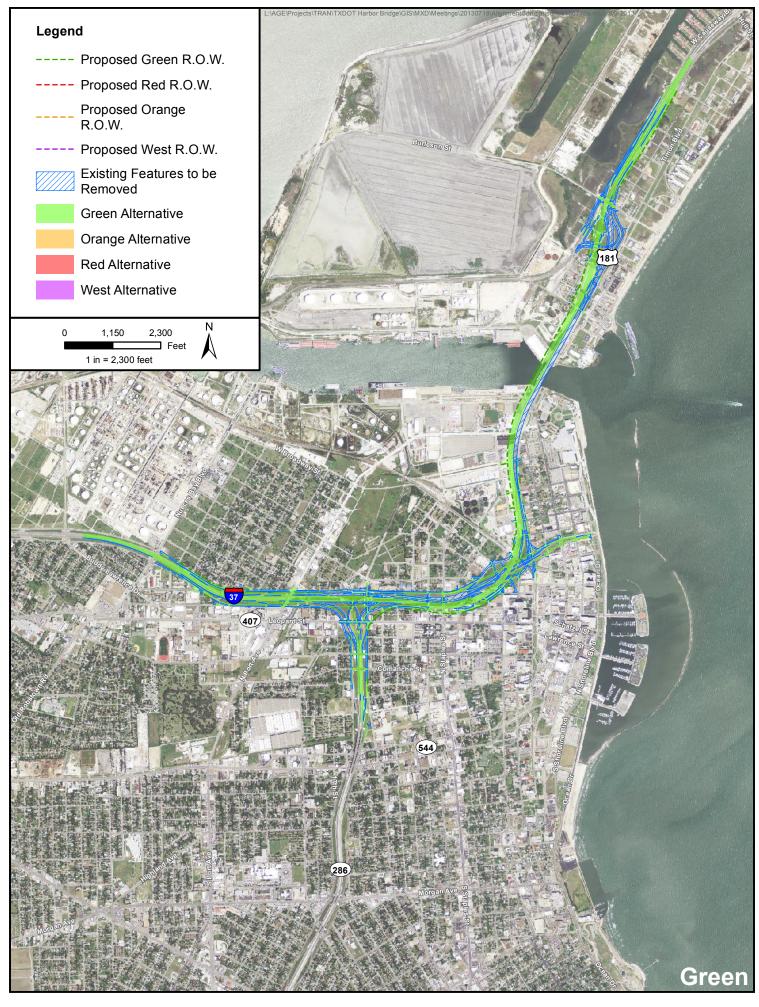
#### **AGENDA**

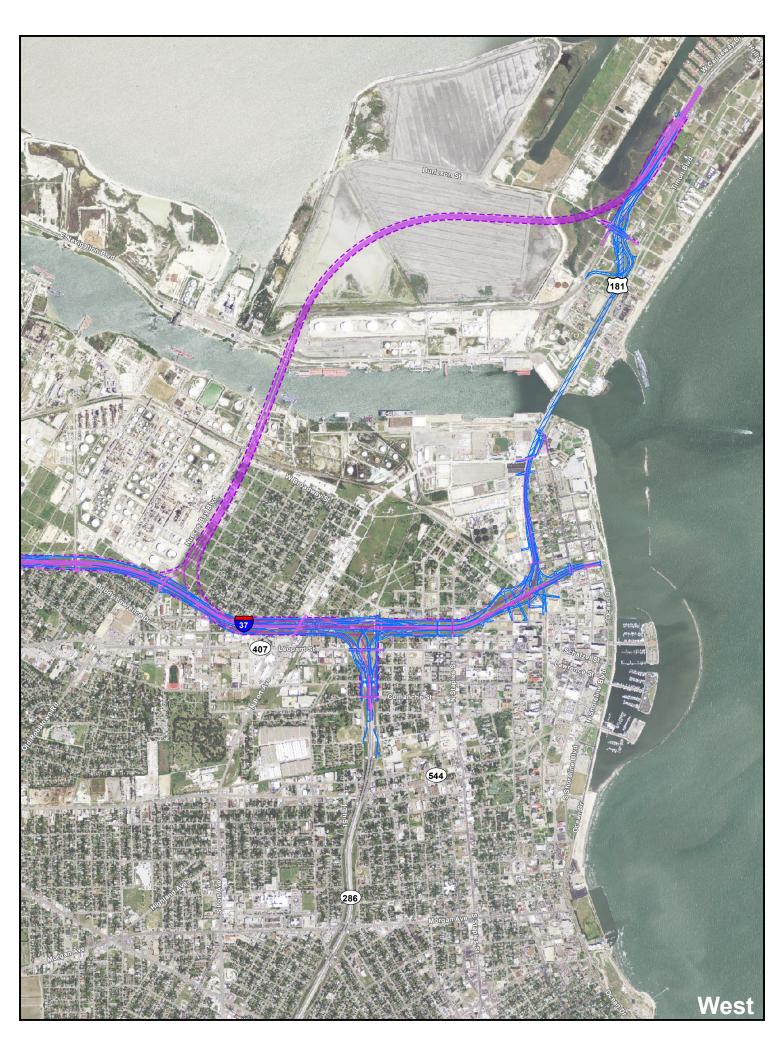
- Welcome and introductions
  - Overview
  - Update on project schedule
- Group discussion of changes in preliminary design for four proposed project alternatives
- Upcoming public involvement opportunities
  - Group discussion of ideas for encouraging continuing community involvement
- Looking ahead: next CAC/TAC meetings and public hearing
- Public comments
- Adjourn

For more information on the Harbor Bridge project, visit our website at <a href="ccharborbridgeproject.com">ccharborbridgeproject.com</a>.











#### **Citizens' Advisory Committee Meeting**

#### **US 181 Harbor Bridge Project**

July 11, 2013 – 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm Oveal Williams Activity Center, 1414 Martin Luther King Drive, Corpus Christi, TX

#### **Meeting Summary**

#### **Display items**

- 1. Dec 2012 preliminary designs for four proposed project alternatives
- 2. July 2013 revised preliminary designs for four proposed project alternatives

#### **Welcome and introductions**

Victor Vourcos and Chris Amy, TxDOT project managers for the Harbor Bridge Project, opened the Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting, welcomed participants, and had everyone introduce themselves. Sixteen CAC members signed in (one substitution). Two members of the public were in attendance.

Mr. Vourcos and Mr. Amy gave an update on the Harbor Bridge Project. They explained that there have been changes in the preliminary designs for the four proposed build alternatives in response to input from the public. These changes include a smaller right-of-way footprint and improved access to areas of the city. They also gave an overview of changes in the project schedule, explaining that the pace of the project has been accelerated with expected completion of the environmental documentation this fall and a Public Hearing in early 2014. In addition, they noted some recent developments in funding for the project.

#### Table discussions of revised preliminary designs

Mr. Vourcos then introduced the meeting facilitator, Susan Howard. Ms. Howard reviewed the meeting agenda and reminded the CAC members of the general meeting guidelines. She described the meeting format: round table discussions with CAC members rotating from table to table (15-minute rotations) to review all four proposed alternatives and provide feedback on revised preliminary designs. CAC members were able to compare the preliminary designs for the four alternatives from the December 4, 2012 public meeting to the current designs, with additional information provided in a handout describing the changes in all the alternatives.

To begin the table discussion, a facilitator seated at each table asked CAC members the following questions:

- 1. What do you notice about the new design? What do you see?
- 2. What concerns or confuses you? What excites you?
- 3. What does this mean for you?
- 4. How do these design changes affect you/Corpus Christ?

Facilitators recorded the responses on easel pads at each table. Once the rotations were completed, Ms. Howard called upon each table facilitator to present the comments collected from his/her table. The comments on each proposed alternative are captured below.

#### **CAC Member Comments – Red Alternative:**

#### Benefits:

- Does not affect Oveal Williams Senior Center
- No impact to highland properties on Navarro St
- Better connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods
- Saves money and space
- Improves connection from Hillcrest community to the east
- Improves connection between Broadway and I-37 under the bridge
- Saves the bridge from becoming lost from sight and being adjacent to the existing bridge

#### Drawbacks:

- Not enough room under US 181 Nueces Bay causeway for trucks wanting to use turnaround
- Last south-bound exit on State Highway (SH) 286/Crosstown Expressway, take city streets to downtown
- Existing traffic backs up on SH 286 the facility ties into this
- Prefer that the bridge be closer to the bay- like the orange alignment
- Alignment divides a community
- Loses the view of the bay area
- Local street traffic backing up in the I-37/SH 286 area
- More congestion on frontage road and I-37/SH 286;use the direct connectors
- Slows traffic getting into downtown; grid lock on local streets
- Takes tourists away from downtown
- SH 286 east-bound must exit Leopard to get downtown
- North-bound safety; no fire station in area or access ramp
- Safety of Beach St.

#### Suggestions:

- Can Broadway St. be improved?
- Can trails be added going east from the Hillcrest community?
- Consider aesthetics for Broadway St. between SH 286 and Shoreline Dr. along I-37.
- Washington Coles community to south of I-37: can this connection be improved?
- Keep the neighborhood connected under US 181.
- Keep Winnebago St. open.

#### **CAC Member Comments – Orange Alternative:**

#### Benefits:

- Better connection to North Port Ave. (truck traffic)
- Friendlier to community smaller interchange
- Community use areas
- Nueces Bay Causeway turnaround
- Agnes St. and Laredo St. improvement and connection from Highway 181 to access downtown
- Better than West Alternative
- Stays closer to downtown
- Improvement over previous preliminary design (2012)
- More "friendly" to community than earlier version that had larger interchange
- New bridge in similar location to current bridge prefer this location to Red or West Alternative
- Bridge location
- "Really like" changes to Orange Alternative (2013 v. 2012)
- Bridge location provides better view of Bay front versus Ship Channel for visitors.

#### **Drawbacks:**

- Concern about access to Port
- Direct access concern about north-bound traffic exiting Highway 181 on Leopard St.; stop sign/light
- Emergency services increase time to aquarium
- Still needs work in downtown area
- Concern about single exit north-bound for North Beach
- Downtown to Portland a "little difficult"
- Closing Winnebago and losing "synergy"
- Neighborhoods access from one side of 181 to other north of I- 37 "connectivity issue"
- Prefer Green Alternative

#### Suggestions:

Need to help downtown traffic move around

- Request shared use path
- Request I-37 E of 181 be a "boulevard"
- Current infrastructure used as an on ramp connecting to northeast infrastructure just south of bridge

#### **Future Plans for City Infrastructure:**

- The new wastewater treatment plant is being moved north of the current location.
- The City of Corpus Christi plans to extend Staples St. past Broadway Blvd. to connect with downtown city streets in the future.

#### **CAC Member Comments – West Alternative:**

#### Benefits:

- Potential for increased property values downtown
- Opportunity to reconnect north side to downtown

#### Drawbacks:

- Concern about volume of event traffic using frontage road box to turn
- Concern about residential acquisitions/displacements.
- Concern about crossing in tank farm emergency access
- Proximity to refineries safety issues
- Length
- More difficult to get to downtown
- · Limited access from neighborhood
- Emergency response time to North Beach
- Construction in dredge area
- Should consider tying into Hwy 358 instead of SH 286
- Poor access for truck traffic downtown
- Too close to refinery and neighborhood
- North-bound business access to I-37
- Detract from skyline/iconic landmark
- Potential for terrorism
- Visual impact to drivers
- Removal of ramps at Crosstown and I-37 downtown access

#### **CAC Member Comments – Green Alternative:**

#### Benefits:

- Exit for aquarium Beach St.
- Fire service emergency access maintained
- Access to Lipan St. and Comanche St. school access.
- Fewer environmental justice impacts/ continuity between neighborhoods
- Thankful to have a bridge

- Same traffic and street patterns
- Does not interfere with Hillcrest and north side Washington-Coles
- Skyline icon status
- Acquisitions/ residents and business
- View from stadium is the same
- Leaving bridge at Tancahua St. is good
- View of bridge; key to city for tourists; closest to water
- Traffic
- Ramps to I-37 better
- Signature view of city

#### **Drawbacks:**

- Noise impacts
- Doesn't really benefit safety because of curve
- Isolates SEA district from downtown on ramp from north can't get off until Staples St.
- Can't get on bridge from downtown
- Hotel in downtown; to go north you have to go to Crosstown Expressway (SH 286)
- Curve still a concern
- For Hillcrest access, must go north to get on the bridge; Port traffic has to do the same
- Grade of bridge and concern with bike and pedestrian
- Problem with trucks turning north of Hillcrest
- Former separation of neighborhoods; Red/Orange alternatives cut neighborhoods in half again
- Same access issues in downtown
- Concerns of bridge grade with resulting curve
- Downtown US 181 too low creates impediments
- Similar to what we have now
- Safety
- Acquisitions of businesses in downtown
- Traffic concern over having stop signs or lights

#### Group discussion of public involvement activities

Ms. Howard then informed CAC members about other upcoming opportunities for public involvement. She mentioned the possibility of additional small neighborhood meetings like the ones held in fall of 2012 and asked for ideas to assist in planning those meetings. She prompted the group by asking for suggestions about possible meeting locations, existing meetings for presentations, locations for displays, etc. No suggestions were proposed but CAC member Mr. Gilbert Cantu made a statement regarding his recognition of and appreciation for the amount of work that had been done

to address the public's concern about the previous proposed preliminary designs (Dec 2012). Several other CAC members echoed the same sentiment.

#### Meeting summary and plans for next meeting

The next CAC meeting will be held before the Public Hearing planned for early 2014.



# Harbor Bridge Citizens' Advisory Committee Meeting October 18, 2011, 6-8 p.m. at the Oveal Williams Senior Activity Center AGENDA

- Welcome and introductions
- A hands-on group review of preliminary schematics (design) for the four project alternatives
- Update on neighborhood meetings that are taking place this fall.
- Your ideas on the public meeting planned for December 4, 2012
- Introduction of the community questionnaire for the Harbor Bridge Project
- Public comments
- Meeting summary and plans for next meeting.

For more information on the Harbor Bridge project, visit our website at **cctxharborbridgeproject.com.** The Harbor Bridge Feasibility Study, Citizens' Advisory Committee and Technical Advisory Committee information, community questionnaire, and other project information can be found there.





## Texas Department of Transportation Corpus Christi District

U.S. 181 Harbor Bridge Project

Environmental Documentation and Schematic Development

Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting

October 18,2012





## Welcome

District Engineer

Victor E. Vourcos, P.E.

Harbor Bridge Project Manager

Texas Department of Transportation

Corpus Christi District Office



## Today's Agenda

- Welcome and introductions
- A hands-on group review of preliminary schematics (design) for the four project alternatives
- Update on neighborhood meetings that are taking place this fall.
- Your ideas on the public meeting planned for December 4, 2012
- Introduction of the community questionnaire for the Harbor Bridge Project
- Public comments
- Meeting summary and plans for next meeting.



### **CAC Ground Rules**

- Facilitated open discussion among committee members and project team members. Everyone is encouraged to participate.
- To ensure that all committee members have an opportunity to speak, please be respectful of our time limits.
- Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting and will be given an opportunity to provide comments at the end of the meeting.



# Harbor Bridge Project Reasonable Alternatives





# **Neighborhood Meetings**

- Listen to community members, show design drawings and latest project information
- Seven planned; two completed

- CC Beach Assn: 9/20

St Paul's: 10/15

Kelsey Memorial: 10/23

Garcia Arts Center: 11/5

Oak Park Elementary: 11/8

Portland Community Ctr: 11/12

Refinery Row: to be scheduled





## **Community Survey**

- Give local residents an opportunity for input on the Harbor Bridge project
- Gather information on neighborhoods/communities potentially impacted by proposed replacement of Harbor Bridge
- May be completed on paper or online at:

ccharborbridgeproject.com

 Information gathered by survey to be used in preparing draft environmental impact statement



## **Public Meeting**

### **Harbor Bridge Public Meeting**

- Date: Tuesday, December 4, 2012
- Location: Solomon Ortiz Center (tentative)
- Format: Open house, presentation, comment session
- Content:
  - Presentation of preliminary designs for project alternatives
  - Opportunities for public content



# **Meeting Summary**

- Parking lot items
- Topics/information needs for next meeting?
- Meeting times/locations?

Thank you for your participation





#### **Citizens' Advisory Committee Meeting**

Harbor Bridge Replacement Project
Improvements to US 181 at the Harbor Bridge over the Corpus Christi Ship
Channel

October 18, 2012 – 6:00 – 8:00 pm Oveal Williams Activity Center, 1414 Martin Luther King Drive, Corpus Christi, TX

#### **Meeting Summary**

#### **Display Items**

- 1. Preliminary design drawings (schematics) on an aerial photo background
- 2. Preliminary right-of-way lines for the four reasonable alternatives

#### Welcome and introductions

Victor Vourcos, TxDOT project manager for the Harbor Bridge Project, opened the Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting, welcomed participants, and asked each member to introduce themselves. He introduced the project team and then introduced the meeting facilitator, Susan Springer. Sixteen CAC members signed in at the meeting and were introduced. In addition, two members of the public were in attendance.

Ms. Springer reviewed the CAC meeting agenda and meeting ground rules. She explained the format of the meeting—group discussions of each of the four alternatives based on a review of the design drawings.

### Hands-on group review of preliminary schematics (design) for the four project alternatives

CAC members were divided into four separate groups to review and discuss the four alternatives, one at a time. Two project team members sat at each table to facilitate and take notes on the table discussions. To initiate the table conversation, the table facilitator asked CAC members the following questions:

- 1. What effect (positive and/or negative) would this alternative have on your neighborhood:
  - a. How you get into and out of the neighborhood (going to schools, shopping, downtown Corpus Christi)?
  - b. The residences in the area?

- c. The local recreational facilities?
- d. The churches in the area?
- e. The schools in the area?
- f. The environment in the area (e.g., air, water, green spaces)?
- g. The overall character of the area?
- 2. Can you think of anything or anyone else that this alternative might affect?
- 3. Are there any other issues associated with this alternative that TxDOT should consider?
- 4. Based on what you're learned today, which alternative would you prefer and why?

#### Results of table discussions

#### Red Alternative:

In general, CAC members saw the red alternative in a positive light. The members noted that this alternative would benefit businesses and tourist attractions in North Beach and would allow larger ships into the Port of Corpus Christi. This alternative also would reduce the barriers to the Hillcrest neighborhood. Although the Oveal Williams Center would be taken, its replacement in another location would be a positive effect.

The red alternative, in their view, would provide a shorter route for evacuation and would provide a good transition to existing roadways.

Negative effects would be the taking of the clinic and Oveal Williams. The alternative would be very close to the Leathers housing project and would have a negative impact on EJ neighborhoods/populations. CAC members thought that this alternative might reduce air quality and make the neighborhoods more isolated from North Beach and tourist attractions than they currently are.

Other issues that the CAC identified in association with the red alternative are the exit/entrance ramps on Nueces Boulevard, the possible worsening of congestion at the Crosstown Expressway, and the need for adequate mitigation. Access to Buck Stadium is needed.

Someone suggested that the Joe C Fulton corridor be considered as an alternative.

#### Orange Alternative

CAC members raised both positive and negative issues associated with the orange alternative, which generally was considered to be less favorable than the red alternative.

Positive effects of the orange alternative included the opportunity for redevelopment and mitigation. CAC members noted that displacements may be acceptable if they are replaced. Another positive is that this alternative has a limited impact on Hillcrest.

Negative effects include the taking of parking for Kelsey Memorial UMC church, and impacts on Elliot Grant homes, the Oveal Williams Center and the clinic. Hillcrest would lose access with this alternative and there would be potential impacts on Ben Garza Park, TC Ayers, Navarro Place, and other community facilities. This alternative would cut the community in half.

CAC members also noted that this alternative has complex ramps on SH 286 south (reduced access) and merging onto 286 takes too long.

#### **Green Alternative**

In general, CAC members viewed the green alternative as having both positive and negative impacts.

The positive effects of the green alternative according to CAC members would be that it would require less construction, and would cause less displacement than the other alternatives. It would have a minimal impact on residents and would preserve the Oveal Williams Center and Winnebago St. This alternative could lead to redevelopment in the North Beach area and would provide better access for commuting.

Negative effects identified by CAC members include the fact that this alternative does not correct safety issues (curves) and does not solve the isolation of Hillcrest and the Northside. It may adversely affect the entertainment district. A higher bridge and more large ships may result in reduced air quality. This alternative does not provide good connectivity to school from the north and does not have a direct exit into the entertainment area (leading to congestion during events).

#### **West Alternative**

In general, CAC members considered the west alternative to have the most negative effects and to be the least desirable of the four alternatives.

A positive effect of this alternative would be to allow people to get to downtown, south, and east destinations more easily. This alternative would be a good use of the Port's dredge spoils site and would improve access to Whataburger Field. It would not impact the Northside and Hillcrest areas, and recreational areas in those locations.

CAC members identified a number of negative effects including their belief that this alternative would make it more difficult to access downtown Corpus Christi and would isolate North Beach. There would be no access to Port Avenue or to the bridge from Hillcrest. There would be sharp curves moving north to south. They also indicated that they thought this alternative would be more costly, and would present safety and security issues because of its proximity to the refineries.

CAC members noted that the west alternative would have a longer hurricane evacuation route and would limit access to the public transit system. This alternative would have greater noise impacts on the neighborhoods and would be dangerously close to the Hillcrest neighborhood.

#### Update on neighborhood meetings taking place this fall

Nancy Gates reviewed the neighborhood meetings currently taking place. The objective of these meetings, held throughout the project area, is to listen to community members, show design drawings and latest project information, and have people complete a community survey.

Seven of these meetings are planned and two have been completed:

CC Beach Association: 9/20

St. Paul's: 10/15

Kelsey Memorial: 10/23
Garcia Arts Center: 11/5
Oak Park Elementary: 11/8

Portland Community Center: 11/12Refinery Row: to be scheduled.

Meetings have been well publicized through direct mailers (postcards), posters, and flyers displayed in various community buildings and meeting places, church bulletins, and posters on local buses. The pastor of St. Paul's church organized a group that distributed meeting flyers throughout the Northside community.

CAC members were encouraged to invite community members to participate in these meetings and were given posters to place in appropriate locations.

#### **Community Survey**

The project team has developed a community survey designed to give local residents an opportunity for meaningful input on the Harbor Bridge project. The information gathered by the survey will be used in completing the community impact assessment for the Harbor Bridge Environmental Impact Statement.

The survey may be completed on paper or online at the project website (ccharborbridgeproject.com)

#### Public meeting planned for December 4, 2012

A public meeting for the Harbor Bridge Project will be held on December 4, 2012 at a location to be determined. The Solomon Ortiz Center is a potential meeting location because it was used previously for the public and agency scoping meetings. This meeting will be used to gather additional public input on the preliminary design drawings that were reviewed by the TAC and CAC.

#### Meeting summary and plans for next meeting

The next CAC meeting will be held in the first quarter of 2013.





#### **Technical Advisory Committee Meeting**

# Harbor Bridge Project Improvements to US 181 at the Harbor Bridge over the Corpus Christi Ship Channel

January 11, 2012 – 2:30 – 4:30 pm Oveal Williams Activity Center, 1414 Martin Luther King Drive, Corpus Christi, TX

#### AGENDA

- Welcome and group introductions/explanation of ground rules
- Group discussion of mission of the Technical Advisory Committee
- Review/group discussion of Harbor Bridge Project history and current status
- Review/group discussion of project Need and Purpose
- Review/group discussion of project alternatives
- Discussion of alternatives analysis process
- Review of Project Timeline
- Group discussion of public involvement activities
- Public comments
- Meeting summary and plans for next meeting

Victor E. Vourcos, P.E., Project Manager TxDOT Corpus Christi District 1701 S. Padre Island Drive Corpus Christi, TX 78416

Victor.Vourcos@txdot.gov



# Texas Department of Transportation Corpus Christi District

U.S. 181 Harbor Bridge Project

Environmental Documentation and Schematic Development

**Technical Advisory Committee Meeting** 

January 11, 2012



# Welcome

John A. Casey, P.E.

District Engineer

Victor E. Vourcos, P.E.

Harbor Bridge Project Manager

Texas Department of Transportation

Corpus Christi District Office



# Today's Agenda

- Welcome and introductions
- Explanation of ground rules
- Group discussion of mission of the Technical Advisory Committee
- Review/group discussion of Harbor Bridge Project history and current status
- Review/group discussion of project Need and Purpose
- Review/group discussion of project alternatives
- Discussion of alternatives analysis process
- Review of Project Timeline
- Group discussion of public involvement activities



## **TAC Ground Rules**

- Facilitated open discussion among committee members and project team members. Everyone is encouraged to participate.
- To ensure that all committee members have an opportunity to speak, please be respectful of our time limits.
- Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting and will be given an opportunity to provide comments at the end of the meeting.



## **TAC Mission**

- To review/monitor environmental studies and engineering products, and provide feedback to TxDOT
- To promote public awareness and understanding of the Harbor Bridge Project
- To share information learned at TAC meetings with others in their field and bring back to TAC meetings any feedback received
- To assist TxDOT in identifying environmental impacts and mitigation strategies for those impacts.



# What is the Harbor Bridge Project?

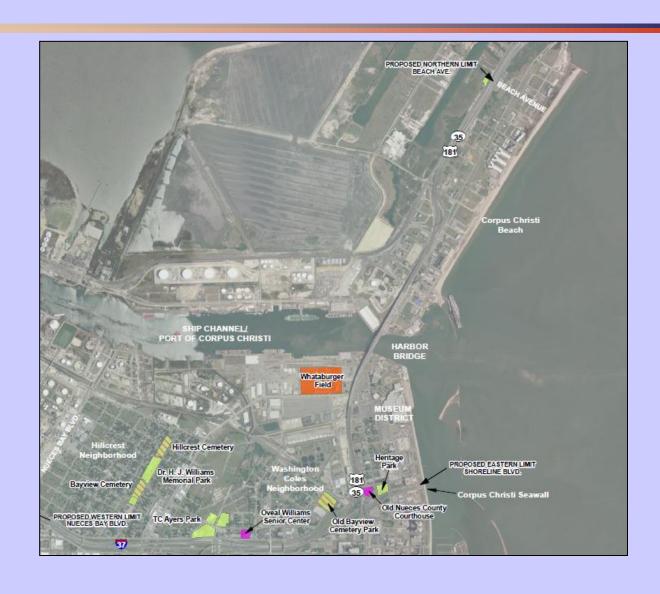
- Proposed improvements to US 181 at the Harbor Bridge over the Corpus Christi Ship Channel.
- Project would extend from Beach Ave on US 181 to Morgan Ave on SH 286



- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is the lead Federal agency for project
- TxDOT is the joint lead agency



# What is the Harbor Bridge Project?





# **Project History and Status**

- 2001 Harbor Bridge Project initiated
- 2003 Feasibility Study completed
- 2004 Environmental and schematic development initiated
- 2005 First scoping meetings held
- 2007 Project limits extended and second round of scoping meetings held



# **Project History and Status**

- 2007 The project put on hold due to lack of funding
- 2009 Project reinitiated with new project limits
- 2010 FHWA determined project should be developed under SAFTEA-LU
- 2011 New Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS published



## **Need for Harbor Bridge Project**

- Additional details were incorporated into the Need
- Safety Risks (Including Hurricane Evacuation)
  - Lack of shoulders
  - Steep vertical grades
  - Sharp horizontal curves
  - Non-standard ramp lengths and spacing



Corpus Christi





## **Need for Harbor Bridge Project**

- Increased difficulty in maintaining the structure's operability over the long-term
- Limited connection to local roadways
- Limited capacity to meet future traffic demands







## Purpose of the Harbor Bridge Project

- Mitigate geometric deficiencies for the highway, including the Harbor Bridge (reduce sharp curves and steep grades) to improve safety for the travelling public including during hurricane evacuations
- Reduce the structural restriction to navigational access at the Port of Corpus Christi (raise the bridge height), thereby promoting expansion and economic opportunity in the area
- Maximize the long-term operation of the Harbor Bridge structure
- Improve the connectivity to the local roadway system
- Meet current standards for capacity on US 181, including the Harbor Bridge, considering projected future traffic demand



## **Alternatives Under Consideration**

Feasibility Study and Scoping Process – Six build alternatives (plus the No Build) are being

considered:

- Red Alternative
- Orange Alternative
- Green Alternative
- Blue Alternative
- Tunnel Alternative\*
- West Alternative\*



\*new alternatives from 1st Scoping Meeting



# US 181 Harbor Bridge Location Map





# **Summary of Preliminary Environmental Constraints**

US 181 – Preliminary Considerations								
Constraints		Alternative Constraints						
		No Build	Red	Orange	Green	Blue	West	Tunnel
Environmental	Environmental Justice neighborhoods		X	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х
	Wetlands, Ecology, and Threatened and Endangered Species					Х	Х	
Envi	Hazardous materials		Х	Х	Х		Х	Х
	Historic Resources		Х	Х	Х	X	Х	Х
Right-of Way	Substantial Right-Of-Way		X	Х		Х	Х	
	Impacts to Parks or Recreational Areas		х	x		x		
	Impacts to Major Existing or Planned Developments		Х	Х	Х	Х	Х	х
Engineering	Safety Considerations	Х			Х	Х		х
	Design Standards	Х			Х			х



# **Alternatives Analysis Methodology**

- Methodology Further Developed
  - Measures of Effectiveness (MOEs) developed to evaluate whether a particular alternative meets the Need & Purpose
    - Each alternative will be evaluated against the Measures of Effectiveness
    - Alternatives may be eliminated from further evaluation if it is determined they do not satisfy the MOEs, and therefore the need and purpose of the proposed project
  - Alternatives that meet the Need & Purpose will be evaluated further



## **Measures of Effectiveness**

Project Purpose	Criteria	Measure		
Mitigate geometric (design)	Corrects geometric (design) deficiencies	Adds shoulders to the bridge and approach sections; reduces the vertical slope; provides ramp lengths commensurate with design speed; provides sufficient spacing for exit ramps to meet driver expectancy; widens travel lanes		
deficiencies to improve safety for travelling public	Upgrades facility to current design standards where appropriate, allowing for warranted exceptions	Utilizes TxDOT's Roadway Design Manua and Bridge Design Manual, including associated references, in designing the proposed improvements		
	Establishes a reliable hurricane evacuation route	Meets State criteria used to determine Hurricane Evacuation routes for the Corpus Christi area		
Reduce structural restriction to navigational access to the inner harbor at the Port of Corpus Christi, thereby promoting the expansion of the Port and spurring economic opportunity in the area	Rehabilitate or replace the existing Harbor Bridge to allow for a structure with greater vertical clearance above the channel	Provides a vertical clearance sufficient to accommodate the sizes and types of vessels that will facilitate the expansion of the Port of Corpus Christi inner harbor and the spurring of economic opportunity in the area		



## **Measures of Effectiveness**

Project Purpose	Criteria	Measure		
Maximize long-term operability of the Harbor Bridge structure	Reduces the cost and frequency of bridge maintenance	Uses non-corrosive building or maintenance materials, such as concrete, and other elements to limit the extent of routine and structural maintenance over the life of the bridge		
	Extends the operational life of the bridge well beyond the expected life of the existing bridge	Uses a 100-year design-life for the rehabilitated or replaced bridge		
	Upgrades the facility to current design standards where appropriate, allowing for warranted exceptions	Utilizes TxDOT's Roadway Design Manual, including associated references, in designing the proposed improvements		
Improve connectivity to the local roadway system	Maintains local roadway accessibility relative to the existing condition	Provides at a minimum the same number of on- and off-ramps as currently exist; does not eliminate access to areas relative to the existing local roadway network		
Meet current standards for capacity to	Increases capacity of the facility (mainlanes and ramps), including the bridge structure	Adds mainlanes if warranted following the project-level traffic analysis; adds shoulders; alters ramp design to increase capacity		
accommodate future traffic demand	Upgrades the facility to current design standards where appropriate, allowing for warranted exceptions	Utilizes TxDOT's Roadway Design Manual, including associated references, in designing the proposed improvements		



## **Measures of Effectiveness**

- Any thoughts?
- The MOEs will be incorporated into the Draft Coordination Plan



## **Coordination Plan**

- A Coordination Plan facilitates and documents TxDOT's and FHWA's interaction with the public and agencies
- Encourages public/agency input to develop the Need & Purpose, Project Build Alternatives and methodology
- Revised Draft Coordination Plan available on our website



## **Harbor Bridge Timeline**

# Prepare Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) followed by Final EIS and Record of Decision (ROD)

- Initiate project development with scoping meetings 2011
- Develop alternatives and begin agency coordination 2012
- Public Meeting 2012 2013
- Prepare and review draft environmental document 2012 2014
- Public Meeting Design Guideline Workshop 2013
- Public Hearing 2014 2015
- Prepare and review final EIS 2014 2016
- Public involvement throughout process



## **Harbor Bridge Timeline**

- Environmental Clearance ROD issued 2016 or as early as 2014
  - Considering Condensed FEIS
- Obtain permits and approvals 2015 2017
- Prepare ROW Map and Acquire ROW 2015 2017
- Develop construction plans 2015 2017
- Start phase construction 2017 2020





## **Public Involvement Activities**

- Public scoping meetings
- Public meetings
- CAC and TAC meetings
- Project website
- Neighborhood/small group informal meetings
- Newsletters
- Project Timeline
- Others? Your ideas requested.



# Public Involvement Opportunities to Share with Community

# Stay involved in the Harbor Bridge Project by participating in the following:

- Follow the project online:
- Sign up to be on our mailing list
- Attend public meetings and public hearing
- Participate in small stakeholder meetings
- Read our newsletter
- Contact TxDOT Project Manager or Public Information Officer
  - Victor E. Vourcos, P.E. Phone: 361.808.2378
     Victor.Vourcos@txdot.gov
  - Tom Tagliabue Phone 361.808.2481 Tom.tagliabue@txdot.gov



## **Public Comments**



# **Meeting Summary**



## **Technical Advisory Committee Meeting**

# Harbor Bridge Project Improvements to US 181 at the Harbor Bridge over the Corpus Christi Ship Channel

January 11, 2012 – 2:30 – 4:30 pm Oveal Williams Activity Center, 1414 Martin Luther King Drive, Corpus Christi, TX

#### **Meeting Summary**

#### Introductions

John Casey, TxDOT Corpus Christi District Engineer welcomed the members of the TAC to the meeting. He introduced himself and invited all committee members to introduce themselves and explain what they hoped to get out of TAC membership. The general sentiment of the group during introductions was the sense of urgency to move forward with the project. Individual TAC members emphasized the importance of the bridge for communities on both its north and south sides, expressed their desire for the Harbor Bridge Project to move forward quickly, and believed that there is some urgency in the need to replace Harbor Bridge. Several individuals indicated their disapproval of the tunnel alternative.

### **Mission of the Technical Advisory Committee**

Nancy Gates, meeting facilitator, reviewed the proposed mission of the TAC.

- To review and monitor environmental studies and engineering products, and provide feedback to TxDOT.
- To promote public awareness and understanding of the project
- To share information learned at TAC meetings with others in their field and to bring back to TAC meetings any feedback received as a result of this information sharing.
- To assist TxDOT in identifying environmental impacts and mitigation strategies for those impacts.

TAC members agreed with this mission.

### **Harbor Bridge Project History and Current Status**

Victor Vourcos, with the TxDOT Corpus Christi District and project manager for the Harbor Bridge Project gave a quick review of the project, which consists of proposed improvements to US 181 at the Harbor Bridge over the Corpus Christi Ship Channel. The project would extend from Beach Ave (at US 181) on the north to Morgan Ave. on SH 286 on the south, so it would include both the bridge itself as well as the associated approaches. The lead federal agency for



the project is the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and TxDOT is co-lead. These two agencies will be working together throughout the project.

Mr. Vourcos explained that TxDOT began the Harbor Bridge Project in 2001 and completed the Feasibility Study in 2003. In 2004, they began their initial environmental process and schematic development (conceptual designs for a bridge replacement), which included TAC meetings. In 2007, FHWA and TxDOT decided to extend the project limits to allow for the future addition of what are called managed (tolled) lanes across the bridge and continuing on SH 286. Because of this change in project limits, TxDOT held a new round of scoping meetings that year. In 2007, TxDOT unfortunately had to put the Harbor Bridge on hold because of a lack of funding. Two years later, in 2009, they were able to reinitiate the project. At that time, TxDOT's administration decided that the managed lanes would no longer be included and therefore the project limits could go back to the original project limits as proposed in 2005. In 2010, FHWA determined that the project should be developed using new regulatory procedures that have come into effect since the project first began.

In June and July of 2011, TxDOT published a Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). This was the first legal step in beginning the EIS process. Public and agency scoping meetings were held to gather input on the possible project alternatives in August and October 2011.

TAC members asked if the original bridge was built for the current load and about the number of lanes on the original bridge. TxDOT indicated that the bridge was not built for the current load but the bridge has been upgraded. The bridge originally had two lanes in each direction with shoulders on both sides. Once traffic warranted it, the bridge was reconfigured for three lanes in each direction and no shoulders. A TAC member representing the Port of Corpus Christi stated that any new bridge would need to be at least 205 high to allow newer, larger ships to enter the Port.

### Review/Group Discussion of Project Need and Purpose

Mr. Vourcos then reviewed the need for the project, which includes safety (e.g., the existing bridge's lack of shoulders, steep vertical slope, challenging roadway approaches); enhanced navigation and economic development of the Port of Corpus Christi (current vertical clearance is a deterrent to larger vessels); increased difficulty in maintaining the structure over the long-term (rising maintenance costs); limited connection to local roadways; and the existing bridge's limited ability to meet future traffic demands. The purpose of the project corresponds to these needs: correcting the sharp curves and steep grades to improve safety, raising the bridge height to improve ship access to the Port of Corpus Christi, maximizing the long-term operation of the Harbor Bridge structure, improving connectivity between the bridge/US 181 and the local roads, and providing adequate capacity on US 181 to meet projected future traffic.

The general public and the cooperating and participating agencies have had an opportunity to comment on this project Need and Purpose, as has the TAC.



## Review/Group Discussion of Project Alternatives

Mr. Vourcos explained that there are currently six build alternatives plus the no build (leaving the existing bridge in place) under consideration, as shown on the Harbor Bridge location map that was distributed to each TAC member. These alternatives are the red, orange, green, blue, tunnel, and west alternatives. The tunnel and west alternatives were proposed during the public and agency scoping process in 2011.

### **Discussion of Alternatives Analysis Process**

Matt Thompson gave the group an overview of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the law that governs the way agencies, such as TxDOT, perform EIS's. These studies are required for any major project that uses federal money and could significantly affect the quality of the human environment. NEPA requires agencies to assess the environmental effects of their proposed actions before they make any decisions. The environmental review process includes extensive public involvement.

As Mr. Thompson explained, the EIS process begins with publication of a Notice of Intent, stating the agency's intent to prepare an EIS for a particular project. TxDOT published this Notice of Intent in the summer of 2011 in the *Federal Register* and in the *Corpus-Christi Caller Times*. When the Notice of Intent was published, it provided information on the first public and agency scoping meeting, which took place in August. The scoping process is used to gather input on possible project alternatives, issues, and alternatives, as well as to get feedback on the project Need and Purpose and the project Coordination Plan. A second set of public and agency scoping meetings were held in October 2011and two new alternatives suggested during the scoping process were identified (the west and tunnel alternatives).

Mr. Thompson explained that TxDOT's analysis of project alternatives will begin with evaluating each alternative to determine whether it meets the project Need and Purpose. To perform this analysis, TxDOT and FHWA have worked together to develop criteria by which each alternative can be measured to determine if it meets each of the elements of the Need and Purpose. These criteria are called the Measures of Effectiveness (MOEs). If an alternative does not meet the Need and Purpose, it will be eliminated from further evaluation. Alternatives that meet the Need and Purpose will be evaluated further during the EIS process. According to NEPA, the EIS must "objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives, and for alternatives which were eliminated from detailed study, briefly discuss the reasons for their having been eliminated."

TAC members asked many clarification questions related to how they are determined and used during the alternatives analysis process. One TAC member asked if the MOEs include cost and TxDOT responded that cost is not a primary factor at this point in the analysis. Mr. Thompson noted that alternatives can be submitted at any time during the process.



### **Group Discussion of Public Involvement Activities**

Nancy Gates reviewed the planned public involvement activities for the Harbor Bridge Project and explained that public involvement is a key component of the project because public input is needed throughout the environmental documentation and schematic development process.

She noted that TxDOT has already held two public (and agency) scoping meetings (2011), and has considered all input received during those meetings, including suggestions for two additional alternatives to be studied. The project Coordination Plan has also been revised based on comments from agencies and the public.

The TAC and Citizens' Advisory Committee have been formed and are holding their first meetings today (January 11, 2012). TxDOT also is available to meet with small neighborhood groups or organizations as requested. The project website (ccharborbridgeproject.com) is active and being updated as new information becomes available. A project newsletter will be mailed quarterly and also will be available on line.

Ms. Gates then posed the following questions to the TAC:

- How can we do a better job of reaching out to the community?
- Where should we meet with people?
- Are there people that we should contact or events in which we should participate?

TAC members had a number of suggestions in response to these questions. They suggested that the project use the City's public access channel for public outreach, ask other organizations to link to the Harbor Bridge website, and provide printed material at the Oveal Williams Center for people, post notices at schools, and run public service announcements for individuals without web access. Some TAC members also suggested using a utility bill insert to communicate about the Harbor Bridge Project, setting up a table at the Hooks game, and attending Parks and Recreation planning meetings, as well as meeting with employees of local companies on both sides of the bridge. They suggested the Ortiz Center, Solomon Coles School, and Miller High School as possible future public meeting locations. Another TAC member noted that it will be important to communicate consistent messages. TxDOT indicated that they are willing to send a project PowerPoint to any TAC member who would like to use it to make a presentation in the community.

## Followup to the TAC Meeting

#### Future TAC Meeting Times/Locations

Most TAC members seemed to think that meeting at the Oveal Williams Center was convenient for most members because of its proximity to downtown Corpus Christi. They also agreed that a mid-afternoon meeting time is a good idea and recommended not having any future meetings on Mondays. One TAC member asked for a more detailed meeting agenda with specific times for topics.



## **Public Comments**

### **Timeline**

Vicki Crnich (TxDOT, Env)): Asked if the project timeline was linear (or sequential).

Answer: It is sequential. Multiple activities are taking place simultaneously to move the project forward efficiently.

H. Carter: Asked if timeline takes the tunnel option into consideration.

Answer: The schedule does take all the alternatives into consideration but is subject to change depending on the final alternative selected.



## **Technical Advisory Committee Meeting**

# Harbor Bridge Project Improvements to US 181 at the Harbor Bridge over the Corpus Christi Ship Channel

June 21, 2012 – 2:30 – 4:30 pm Oveal Williams Activity Center, 1414 Martin Luther King Drive, Corpus Christi, TX

#### **AGENDA**

- Welcome and introductions
- Review of ground rules and TAC mission
- Review/group discussion of project Need and Purpose
- Review/group discussion of project alternatives analysis
- Review/group discussion of Harbor Bridge Project status
- Review/group discussion of community impact analysis activities
- Group discussion of public outreach activities including next public meeting
- Public comments
- · Meeting summary and plans for next meeting

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www.ccharborbridgeproject.com



# Texas Department of Transportation Corpus Christi District

U.S. 181 Harbor Bridge Project

Environmental Documentation and Schematic Development

**Technical Advisory Committee Meeting** 

June 21,2012



# Welcome

Victor E. Vourcos, P.E.

Harbor Bridge Project Manager

Texas Department of Transportation

Corpus Christi District Office



## Today's Agenda

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- Review of ground rules and TAC mission
- Review/group discussion of project Need and Purpose
- Review/group discussion of project alternatives analysis
- Review/group discussion of Harbor Bridge Project status
- Review/group discussion of community impact analysis activities
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- Meeting summary and plans for next meeting.



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- To review/monitor environmental studies and engineering products, and provide feedback to TxDOT
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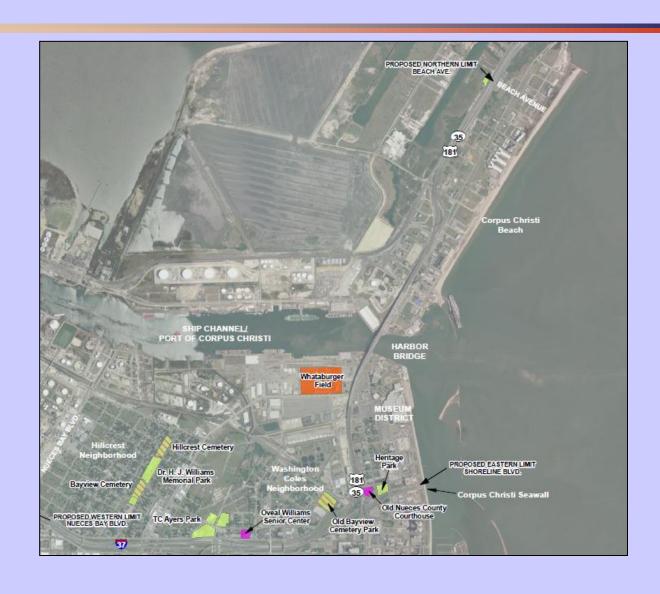
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- Project would extend from Beach Ave on US 181 to Morgan Ave on SH 286



- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is the lead Federal agency for project
- TxDOT is the joint lead agency



# What is the Harbor Bridge Project?





## **Project Timeline**

Feasibility Study complete - 2003

2011 – New NOI published

2011-2012 Scoping Process

First CAC meeting - 2012

Purpose & Need Finalized - 2012

2012 - Alternatives analysis begins



## Purpose and Need for Harbor Bridge Project

- Clear, well-justified purpose and need explains that expenditure of funds is necessary and worthwhile, and why impacts are acceptable based on project's importance.
- Purpose and need drives process for alternatives consideration, in-depth analysis, and ultimate selection.





## **Need for Harbor Bridge Project**

## To maintain long-term operation of the Harbor Bridge

- Corrosion of bridge steel and continued deterioration
- Harbor Bridge is "fracture critical"
- Increased difficulty and costs associated with maintaining

the structure over the long-term





## **Need for Harbor Bridge Project**

## To minimize safety risks caused by design deficiencies

- Lack of shoulders on Harbor Bridge/US 181
- Steep grade on bridge and "s" curves on north/south ends of bridge
- US 181 southbound (south of bridge) does not meet current design standards
- Ramp lengths do not providing adequate acceleration/deceleration space
- Hurricane evacuation routes are prone congestion



## **Objectives of the Harbor Bridge Project**

- Objectives fall under Project Needs
  - Used to evaluate alternatives during EIS process
  - Provide transportation infrastructure to expand economic opportunity
  - Consider connection between the bridge/US 181 and local roadways
  - Consider ability to meet future traffic demands on US 181





## **Alternatives Under Consideration**

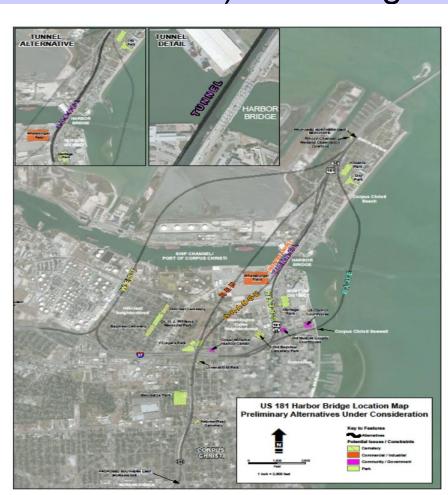
Six build alternatives (plus the No Build) are being

considered:

Red Alternative

- Orange Alternative
- Green Alternative
- Blue Alternative
- Tunnel Alternative\*
- West Alternative\*

\*new alternatives from 1st Scoping Meeting





## **Scoping Process Now Complete**

- TxDOT/FHWA have refined Purpose and Need
- Six alternatives have been evaluated to see if they meet Purpose and Need
- Four reasonable alternatives (plus the no-build) will be carried forward for analysis in the EIS



# Harbor Bridge Project Reasonable Alternatives





# Harbor Bridge Project Reasonable Alternatives

- Tunnel alternative eliminated from further consideration because:
  - It did not meet the safety need for the project
    - Does not meet TxDOT's standard for appropriate hurricane evacuation routes for the Corpus Christi Area
- Blue alternative eliminated from further consideration because:
  - It did not meet the safety need for the project
    - Does not meet TxDOT's standard for appropriate hurricane evacuation routes for the Corpus Christi Area



# Status of Harbor Bridge Project Activities

# **Environmental Impact Statement underway: What would be affected if we build this project?**

## Data collection taking place for potential impacts to:

- Land use
- Ecology
- Socioeconomics of project area
- Neighborhoods and communities
- Air quality
- Hazardous materials
- Historic resources
- Impacts to parks or recreational areas
- Impacts to major existing or planned developments



## **Community Impact Assessment**

- What effect would proposed project have on local communities?
- Important aspect of EIS analysis
- Process for evaluating the effects of proposed transportation projects on a community and the quality of life.



## **Community Impact Assessment**

- Planned activities for assessing community impact in project area
  - Outreach plan for interacting with community groups and individuals
  - Evaluation of census and other socioeconomic data
  - Questionnaires
  - Small group meetings in neighborhood locations this summer and fall
  - Your input is important for addressing community concerns and issues



# Coming Up Next on Harbor Bridge Project

# Prepare Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) followed by Final EIS and Record of Decision (ROD)

- CAC and Technical Advisory Group (TAC) meetings 2012 2014
- Public Meeting 2012
- Prepare and review draft environmental document 2012 2014
- Public Meeting Design Guideline Workshop 2013
- Public Hearing 2014 2015
- Prepare and review final EIS 2014 2016
- Public involvement throughout process



## **Public Involvement Activities**

- Public meetings
- CAC and TAC meetings
- Project website
- Newsletters
- Neighborhood/small group informal meetings
- Others? Your ideas requested.





# Public Involvement Opportunities to Share with Community

# Stay involved in the Harbor Bridge Project by participating in the following:

- Follow the project online:
- Sign up to be on our mailing list
- Attend public meetings and public hearing
- Participate in small stakeholder meetings
- Read our newsletter
- Contact TxDOT Project Manager or Public Information Officer
  - Victor E. Vourcos, P.E. Phone: 361.808.2378
     Victor.Vourcos@txdot.gov



## **Public Comments**



# **Meeting Summary**

- Parking lot items
- Topics/information needs for next meeting?
- Meeting times/locations?

Thank you for your participation



## **Technical Advisory Committee Meeting**

Harbor Bridge Replacement Project
Improvements to US 181 at the Harbor Bridge over the Corpus Christi Ship
Channel

June 21, 2012 – 2:30 – 4:30 pm Oveal Williams Activity Center, 1414 Martin Luther King Drive, Corpus Christi, TX

#### **Meeting Summary**

## **Display Items**

- 1. Land Use Maps on an aerial photo background showing land use information and preliminary right of way lines for four reasonable alternatives.
- 2. The Project Location Map showing each of the four reasonable alternatives.

#### Welcome and introductions

Victor Vourcos, TxDOT project manager for the Harbor Bridge Project, opened the TAC meeting and welcomed participants and asked each member to introduce themselves. He introduced the project team and then introduced the meeting facilitator, Susan Springer.

Ms. Springer reviewed the TAC mission (accepted by the TAC at the January 2012 meeting) and meeting ground rules. She reiterated that the meeting was intended to be a conversation rather than a presentation, and that TxDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) consider the TAC to be an important link with the community and conduit for information exchange. TAC members voiced no objections to the mission and ground rules of the committee. Ms. Springer then introduced Mr. Vourcos, who began the technical presentation.

### Review/group Discussion of Project Need and Purpose

Mr. Vourcos briefly reviewed the project background especially for new TAC members. He explained the project history and quick overview of the current status of the project.

Mr. Vourcos then explained to the group that the project Purpose and Need has been refined since the last meeting to reflect input from the public as well as FHWA and TxDOT. Mr. Vourcos explained that the project Purpose and Need explains why expenditure of funds is necessary and why impacts are acceptable based on the project's importance. The Purpose and Need is used to evaluate possible alternatives and ultimately make a selection of a preferred alternative.

The two needs for the project are:

- To maintain long-term operation of the Harbor Bridge
- To minimize safety risks caused by design deficiencies.

The first need is related to the fact that the Harbor Bridge is prone to corrosion (as a steel bridge over salt water) and is experiencing continued deterioration. The bridge is fracture critical, which means that the key structural elements supporting the bridge are not themselves supported by additional and redundant elements. Although this does not mean that the bridge is inherently unsafe, there is no second line of protection should one of these elements fail. Maintaining the Harbor Bridge over the next 30-45 years will require not only millions of dollars but also periods of time when the bridge would have to be closed to traffic.

The other need addresses the safety risks caused by design deficiencies on the bridge and its approaches. The current bridge does not meet current FHWA and TxDOT roadway and bridge design standards because of its lack of shoulders, steep grades on the bridge and sharp "s" curves on the north and south ends of the bridge, inadequate ramp lengths for acceleration/deceleration, all of which serve to reduce capacity and efficiency during a hurricane evacuation.

In addition to these project needs, Mr. Vourcos explained that there are three project objectives that will be used to evaluate project alternatives. These objectives have a lower level of importance during the evaluation process:

- Provide transportation infrastructure to expand economic opportunity
- Consider connection between the bridge/US 181 and local roadways
- Consider ability to meet future traffic demands on US 181.

#### TAC members asked:

- When was the bridge built? Response It opened in 1959;
- What is the current standard for bridge grades? Response There is a 5% grade on the approach to existing bridge. Any new bridge would have a 4% grade on the approaches to the bridge.
- What traffic capacity was the existing bridge designed for? Response The
  design traffic volume is unknown but the original bridge was constructed with two
  lanes in each direction with shoulders. Several years later when traffic volumes
  warranted it, a third lane was added in each direction.

### Review/group discussion of project alternatives analysis

Mr. Vourcos next summarized the process of how TxDOT has analyzed the six possible alternatives for the bridge (in addition to the no-build alternative). As of the January, 2012 TAC meeting, six alternatives were being considered: the red, orange, green, blue, west, and tunnel. Two of these alternatives (west and tunnel) had been suggested during the public scoping process that took place last summer and fall.

During the alternatives screening process, TxDOT compared each of these alternatives to the two project needs, which resulted in two of the alternatives being dropped from further consideration. The Blue and Tunnel Alternatives were both eliminated because they do not meet the safety need for the project. In both cases, they do not meet TxDOT's standard for appropriate hurricane evacuation routes for the Corpus Christi area. In the case of the tunnel alternative, redundant pumping systems would be

needed in the event of flooding during a storm surge. The Blue Alternative would result in another causeway that could become impassable in the event of a storm surge.

### TAC members had the following questions:

 One TAC member asked if all of the remaining four alternatives would be environmentally cleared. Response: All four alternatives would be carried through the environmental clearance process as part of the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). It is anticipated that a preferred alternative will be identified in the draft EIS.

## Review/group discussion of Harbor Bridge Project status

Mr. Eddie Sutherland told the group that the scoping process for the Harbor Bridge project is now complete. The environmental analysis portion of the project is underway. Data is now being collected for potential impacts to land use, socioeconomics of the project area, neighborhoods, air quality, hazardous materials, historic resources, parks and recreational areas, and major existing or planned developments.

## Review/group discussion of community impact analysis activities

Mr. Sutherland reviewed the community impact assessment that will be taking place beginning later this summer. This assessment looks at the effect of the proposed project on local communities and is part of the EIS analysis process. Planned activities for this assessment include an outreach plan for reaching as many community groups and individuals as possible, evaluation of census and other socioeconomic data, questionnaires, and small group "listening sessions" in various neighborhood locations.

#### **Questions and Comments from TAC members:**

 One member asked, how does TxDOT determine neighborhood boundaries for this assessment? Response: The consultant team will ask community members where they live, shop and work, and where they think their neighborhood boundaries are located.

- Another member suggested a robust awareness campaign to let them know about the project website. They thought that TxDOT almost needs an Awareness Campaign to educate people on the project; TV, radio, billboards; go to where people are and talk to them; reach out to community leaders.
- Another member stated that other groups have done surveys (Local Emergency Planning Committee; Texas A&M University Corpus Christi); use the Convention and Visitor's Bureau as a resource.
- One TAC member requested that TxDOT communicate with the public to let them know that the existing bridge is a "disaster waiting to happen."
- Another member suggested that TxDOT make use of the City's list of neighborhood organizations for this effort.
- Are there factors with alternatives that TxDOT/FHWA need to consider such as safety, homeland security, etc.)? It may help TxDOT/FHWA to coordinate with local industry representatives and organizations.

### Group discussion of public outreach activities

Ms. Nancy Gates reviewed public involvement activities taking place on the Harbor Bridge project and urged the TAC members to share information with the community and encourage them to get involved in the project. The next public meeting is anticipated to be held in the late fall of 2012 or early winter of 2013. The Harbor Bridge website will be updated continuously and a newsletter will be coming out this summer. Any ideas about reaching out to the public are welcomed.

- Comment: Keith Arnold People will want to know what happens with the existing US 181 approaches and the bridge.
- Question: Tom Niskala Is there some mitigation proposed for the existing barrier created by I-37/US 181(freeway and approaches to the bridge) and the effect on community cohesion?
  - Response: There has been coordination with the City of Corpus Christi about removing the approach (on fill) to the bridge and part of I-37 and creating a boulevard type of facility as an entrance to central business district and the museum/entertainment district.

#### **Public comments**

- Question: How will the bridge affect school district properties?
   Response: The consultant team is starting to study the affected environment in the project area such as neighborhoods and School districts. This will include coordination with school district representatives.
- Question: When will the public get a chance to look at possible bridge designs?
   Response: A bridge design guideline workshop will be held in 2013.
- Question: Will you be considering the look of the bridge from the various neighborhoods?

Response: Yes, visualizations of the facility from the neighborhood perspective are being developed.

A group discussion of the four build alternatives yielded the following comments on the alternatives from TAC members:

#### West:

- Question: Could the West Alternative have a lower air draft clearance over the ship channel since the alignment is about a mile up the Ship Channel?
   Response: Air draft clearance would still be an issue since there is still a substantial amount of ship channel to the west of where the West Alternative would cross the Ship Channel. Height and location analyses are needed to see if the west alternative would allow more use of the main entrance to the Port without raising the bridge height.
- Comment from the Port: Cruise ship companies have not committed to the Port
  of Corpus Christi because of the current 138' air draft clearance. The Port is
  currently studying the potential for cruise ships to call at the Port. The minimum
  standard height of the bridge is currently 138 ft and the desired height is 205 ft.
  The cruise industry says that only 20-30% of their current fleet can fit below a
  138-ft bridge.

- Comment: The West Alternative's proximity to refineries could be a concern for Dept. of Homeland Security; also would have wetland impacts.
  - Response: Both issues will be coordinated and addressed in the DEIS.
- Comment: There may be safety issues associated with the west alternative coming into the Crosstown Expressway.
- Comment: On the north end of the west alternative are some environmentally sensitive areas (wetlands in Rincon Channel).
- Comment: Mr. David Krebs (Portland Mayor) thinks the West Alternative has safety problems.

#### Green:

- Question: What is the Port's perspective on the effect on industry?
   Response: (By Port) Green Alternative affects existing development and some planned development.
- Question: Does the Green Alternative solve the slope issues?
   Response: Yes. It would reduce the grade from the current 5% to 4%.
   To get to desired bridge height, you have to start elevating immediately.
- Question: Does the green follow the same alignment as the current bridge and
  will it be within the existing right of way?
   Response: It would be parallel and to the west. The curvature would have to be
  addressed. It would be able to use some of the existing right of way but
  additional right of way would be required.
- Question: Would the green eliminate the blind entrance ramp on the south side?
   Response: Yes, the new bridge would have to be built to current design standards.
- Comment: The green is the only one of the four alternatives that would not benefit downtown Corpus Christi and invigorate the local neighborhoods by eliminating the existing barriers.
- Comment: Barry Wolfson Bridge is a critical landmark. Some of the alternatives are pushing it away from the entrance to the Port. Would this affect the landmark

quality? Response: This will need to be part of the aesthetic analysis in the DEIS.

#### Orange:

- Question: What is the proposed elevation of the bridge?
   Response: The design process will determine the elevation, working with the Port, the City and the Counties.
- Question: What are the effects on existing development (e.g., Whataburger Field)?
  - Response: We're very aware of these potential issues and have already been studying things such as the shadow effects of a new bridge on the Whataburger Field.
- Question: What heights are being considered for the new bridge?
   Response: The height will be determined by the environmental process. (See responses from the Port under the Green alternative.)

#### Red:

- Comment: The MPO representative stated that the Red Alternative is most
  effective from a regional mobility perspective. The Port representative stated
  that right-of-way would be easier to acquire from them on the Red Alternative
  and might allow widening at the mouth of the Ship Channel for their future
  improvements.
- Question: Is the Red Alternative too far back to maintain the "landmark" status?
   Response: TxDOT is planning to prepare photo-simulations and a "signature structure" is anticipated for any new bridge.
- Comment: The Red Alternative is favored by the Port because it provides the
  best connection to the existing system. It would allow the Port to remove the
  narrow area at the mouth of the Ship Channel.

#### Additional Comments from the Members:

 Comment: City representative stated that the old alignment can be removed for all alternatives except the Green. Response: The area can be used for tourism and would allow direct access to Convention Center and Bayfront Science Park with a boulevard design.

- Comment: There are traffic problems when there are multiple events downtown.
- Question: How long will it take to construct a new bridge?
   Response: TxDOT is anticipating that it will take four years to build.
- Question: What percent of jobs in Corpus Christi are related to the Port activities?

Response: The Port representative stated that there are approximately 5,000 jobs directly related to the Port and approximately 20,000 total jobs in the Corpus Christi area.

- Question: When will engineering drawings be available?
   Response: It is anticipated that they will be available in the fall of 2012.
- Question: Is there a list of business displacements?
- Response: Not yet, at this time the estimated additional right-of-way is very preliminary.
- Q: What are the cost differentials and heights for the four alternatives?
   Response: We don't have those numbers yet but should be available once the preliminary schematics are available later this year.

#### Meeting summary and plans for next meeting

The next TAC meeting will be held in the fall of 2012. TAC members requested additional information on the alternatives (along with ROW) and that information will be shared at this meeting.

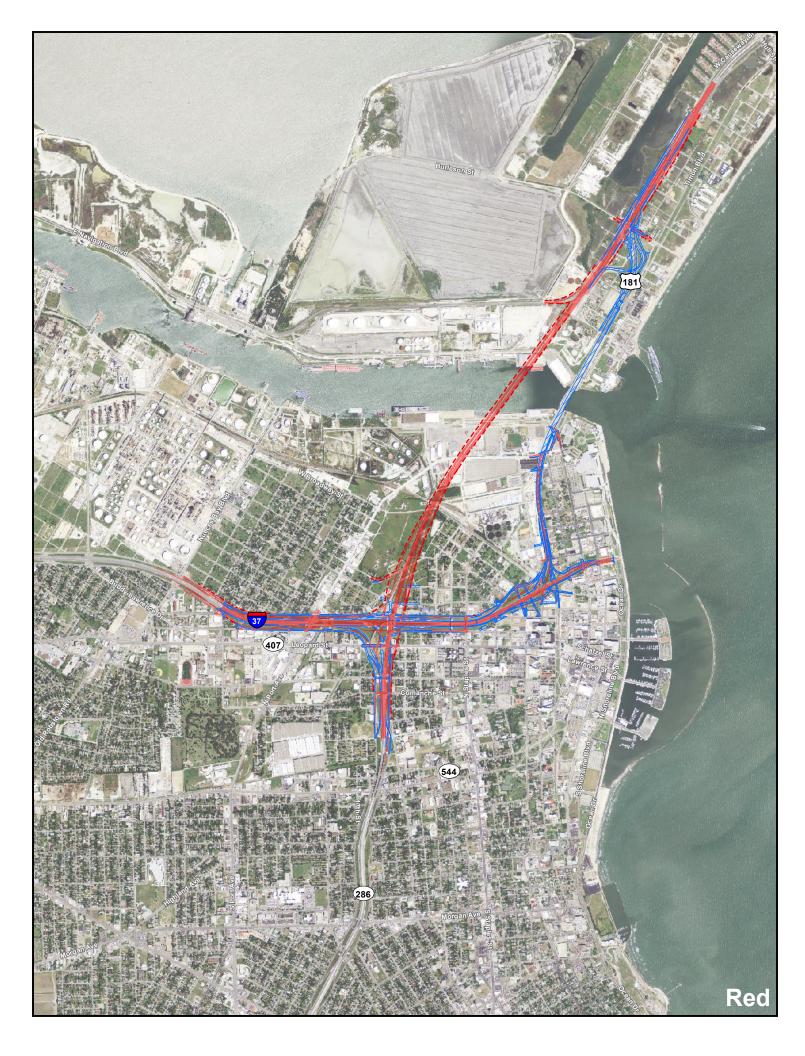


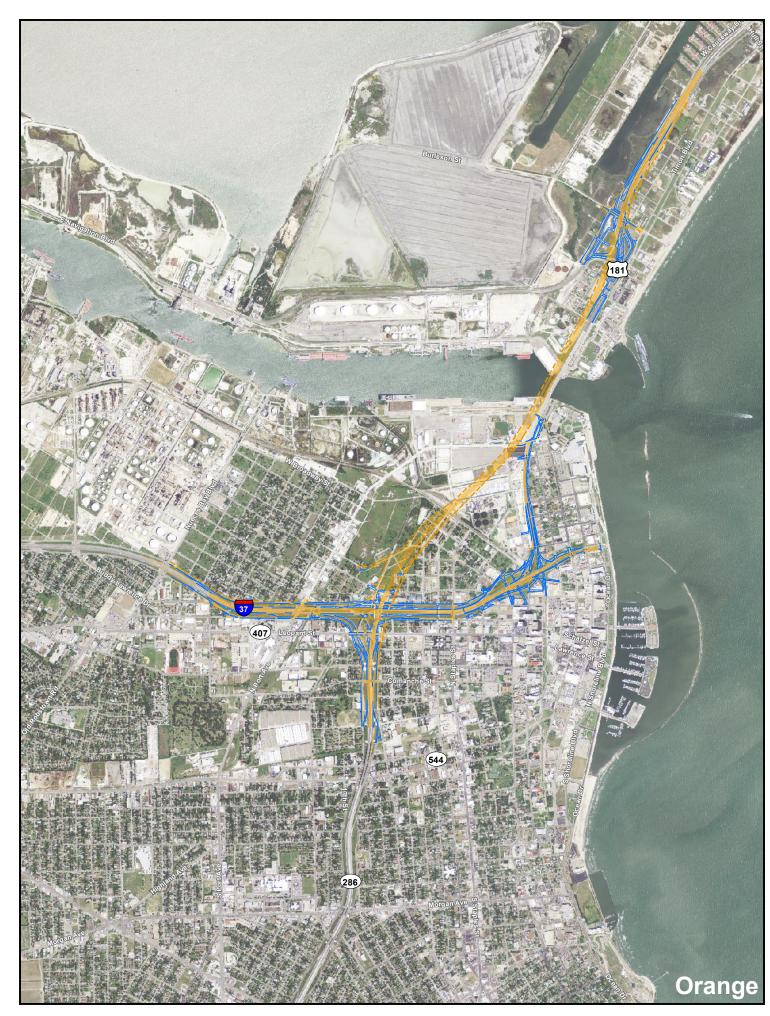
## Harbor Bridge Technical Advisory Committee Meeting July 11, 2013, 2:30–4:30 p.m. at the Oveal Williams Senior Activity Center

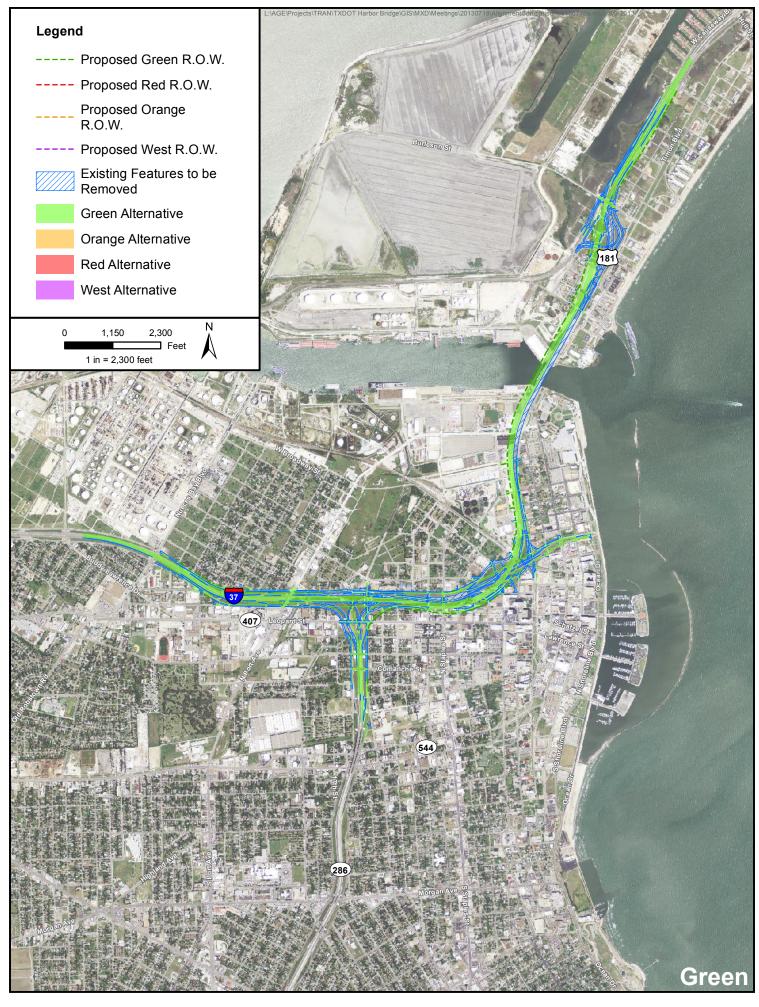
#### **AGENDA**

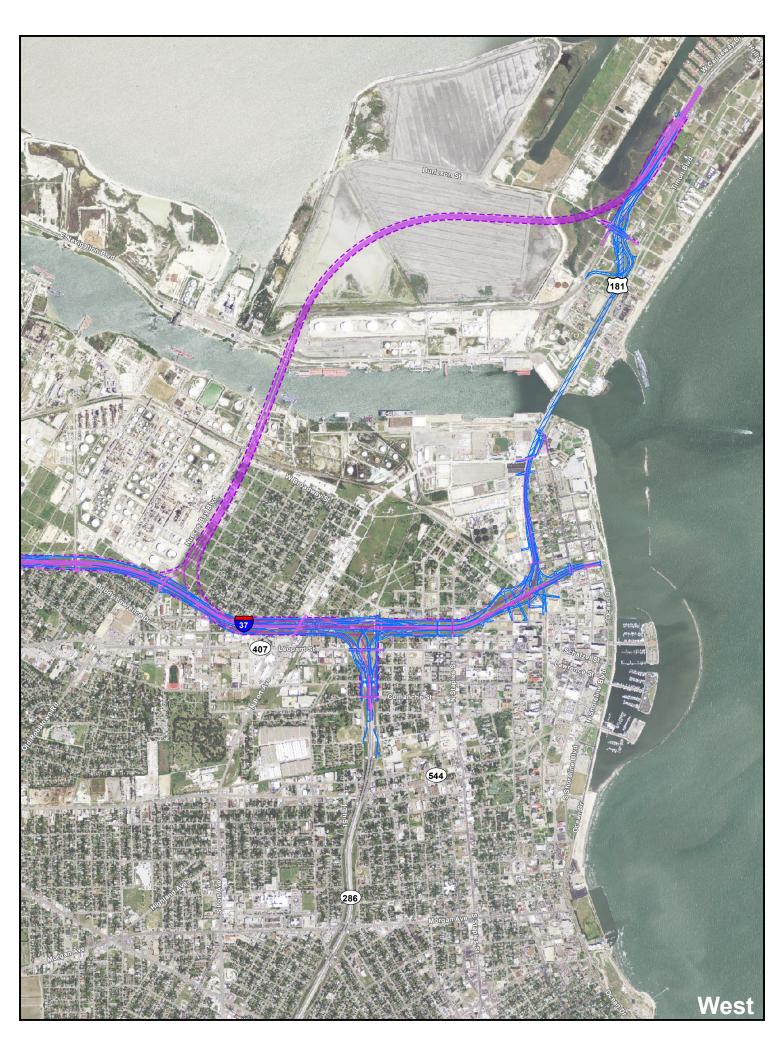
- Welcome and introductions
  - Overview
  - Update on project schedule
- Group discussion of changes in preliminary design for four proposed project alternatives
- Upcoming public involvement opportunities
  - Group discussion of ideas for encouraging continuing community involvement
- Looking ahead: next CAC/TAC meetings and public hearing
- Public comments
- Adjourn

For more information on the Harbor Bridge project, visit our website at <a href="ccharborbridgeproject.com">ccharborbridgeproject.com</a>.











#### **Technical Advisory Committee Meeting**

#### **US 181 Harbor Bridge Project**

July 11, 2013 – 2:30 pm – 4:30 pm Oveal Williams Activity Center, 1414 Martin Luther King Drive, Corpus Christi, TX

#### **Meeting Summary**

#### **Display Items**

- 1. Dec 2012 preliminary designs for four proposed project alternatives
- 2. July 2013 revised preliminary designs for four proposed project alternatives

#### Welcome and introductions

Victor Vourcos and Chris Amy, TxDOT project managers for the Harbor Bridge Project, opened the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting, welcomed participants, and had everyone introduce themselves. Eighteen TAC members signed in (four substitution).

Mr. Vourcos and Mr. Amy gave an update on the Harbor Bridge Project. They explained that there have been changes in the preliminary designs for the four proposed build alternatives in response to input from the public. These changes include a smaller right-of-way footprint and improved access to areas of the city. They also gave an overview of changes in the project schedule, explaining that the pace of the project has been accelerated with expected completion of the environmental documentation this fall and a Public Hearing in early 2014. In addition, they noted some recent developments in funding for the project.

#### **Table Group Discussion of Revised Preliminary Designs**

Mr. Vourcos then introduced the meeting facilitator, Susan Howard. Ms. Howard reviewed the meeting agenda and reminded the TAC members of the general meeting guidelines. She described the meeting format: round table discussions with TAC members rotating from table to table (15-minute rotations) to review all four proposed alternatives and provide feedback on revised preliminary designs. TAC members were able to compare the preliminary designs for the four alternatives from the December 4, 2012 public meeting to the current designs, with additional information provided in a handout describing the changes in all the alternatives.

To begin the table discussion, a facilitator seated at each table asked TAC members the following questions:

- 1. What do you notice about the new design? What do you see?
- 2. What concerns or confuses you? What excites you?
- 3. What does this mean for you?
- 4. How do these design changes affect you/Corpus Christ?

Facilitators recorded the responses on easel pads at each table. Once the rotations were completed, Ms. Howard called upon each table facilitator to present the comments collected from his/her table. The comments on each proposed alternative are captured below.

#### **TAC Member Comments – Red Alternative:**

#### Benefits:

- Reduced impacts to cultural/historical resources
- Like connection to SH 286.
- Freeway/Blvd section to downtown
- People attending special events at Whataburger Field have various ways to leave facility.
- Access to south side of Port; entertainment district (e.g., restaurants)
- Connects downtown completely

#### **Drawbacks:**

- Leaving the Whataburger Field; potential congestion
- North-bound exit ramp at Beach Street- only way to get to tourist sites.
- No direct exit from Southbound US 181 to Laredo St.
- Added travel time from Portland to downtown Corpus Christi.
- Increased traffic on local streets not enough capacity.
- Special events create gridlock.
- North-bound truck traffic coming from port → No direct access to bridge
- Truck traffic from Port Ave. to north-bound I-37 → Need entrance ramp

#### Suggestions:

- Would like direct connectors back in from south-bound US 181 to east-bound I-37
- Would like the four direct connectors shown in 2012 layout restored
- Would like to see Staples St. as an at-grade intersection
- Need more direct access to bridge
- Between US 181 and Bay front would like no bridges and more of a city street design

#### **TAC Member Comments – Orange Alternative:**

#### Benefits:

- Aerial tram for people over Ship Channel
- Second favorite option
- Maintain a structure near the Bay front to promote tourism

#### **Drawbacks:**

- People are impatient.
- Limited access and flow into downtown
- Circulation in circle from Port to old Highway 181 to frontage road and through box interchange
- No direct connectors for Port traffic to north-bound US 181
- Reducing access to North Beach to one exit at Beach Ave.
- Alignment will form barrier between ball park and SEA district

#### Suggestions:

- Pedestrian tram across the Ship Channel
- There needs to be an access ramp from east-bound frontage road to I-37- east of US 181.
- There needs to be a cross streets under Highway 181 north of I-37 connecting Washington Coles and Hillcrest neighborhoods
- Braided ramps needed to/from I-37 west of Port Ave.

#### TAC Member Comments - West Alternative:

#### **Benefits:**

- Reduces downtown bridge and US 181 maintenance
- County prefers more access to downtown.
- Connectivity in downtown area
- Pulls entire Northside neighborhoods together, potential to renew activity.
- Direct connects to Portland from downtown Corpus Christi.

#### Drawbacks:

- Reduced access to North Beach development and tourist attractions
- North Beach single exit
- Ramp capacity major concern
- Downtown too far away from bridge
- Security is a concern through the port area and tank farm.
- Loss of bridge as downtown icon
- Access from local neighborhoods is limited.
- Accidents at tank farm will shut down freeway.
- Access to new bridge will be restricted- no photos.
- Encroaches into designated wetlands, Rincon Channel, flight paths.

- Dredge spoil placement conflict with long-term placement
- Increased Eagle Ford Shale activity could conflict.
- New oil dock in Portland area conflicts with crossing.

#### Suggestions:

 Reported that Corpus Christi City Manager suggested pedestrian access across the Ship Channel

#### **TAC Member Comments – Green Alternative:**

#### Benefits:

- View from Whataburger Field
- Least expensive alternative
- Eliminates some old infrastructure; opens up for redevelopment
- Improved access to downtown at Staples
- Acquisition of Port building on north side (very important building to Port).
- Port connections/ramps satisfactory
- Morgan St. connection to downtown is straight; similar to existing.

#### **Drawbacks:**

- Green is a bad idea- doesn't provide continuity between SEA district and waterfront.
- Limits development
- Can't get on bridge from downtown to go to Staples- no exits to Whataburger Field- all have to go to Crosstown- prefer Red or Orange.
- Increased travel time to downtown Ortiz Center opposite cruise terminal.
- Limits real estate development.
- Difficult access from San Patricio County
- Separates Washington Coles from downtown
- Portland access to downtown limits are shorter.
- Curve is an issue and with grade is complicated with weave to ramps.
- Not as good for community cohesion
- Redevelopment and cohesion is not as good. Limits pedestrian, cohesive walkable downtown. Roadway creates a physical barrier.
- Braided interchange to get trucks from Port to interstate without going through multiple intersections. Same concern for special event traffic to Whataburger Field, etc.
- Similar to existing/maintaining what we have
- Still have curve and grade problem.
- Other alternatives restore connectivity in downtown- does not allow for enough redevelopment.
- Leaving downtown doesn't have direct connection.
- Still hard to exit in Beach St. (for all alternatives)

- Leaving downtown/Shoreline going to North Beach very hard
- Decreasing connections between North Beach and downtown
- Neighborhood access limited to bridge
- Bus acquisitions in downtown
- Acquisition of Brewster St. venue, water park would also be impacted.

#### Suggestions:

Needs access road over to SEA district.

#### Group discussion of public involvement activities

Ms. Howard then informed TAC members about other upcoming opportunities for public involvement. She mentioned the possibility of additional small neighborhood meetings like the ones held in fall of 2012 and asked for ideas to assist in planning those meetings. She prompted the group by asking for suggestions about possible meeting locations, existing meetings for presentations, locations for displays, etc.

#### Suggestions by TAC members:

- "City Hall in the Mall"
- Downtown Management District/Artwalk Board presentation
- Specific request made by Wes Pierson To make more financial/funding information available to public.

#### Meeting summary and plans for next meeting

The next TAC meeting will be held sometime before the Public Hearing planned for early 2014.



## Harbor Bridge Technical Advisory Committee Meeting October 18, 2011, 2:30 – 4:30 p.m. at the Oveal Williams Senior

#### **AGENDA**

**Activity Center** 

- Welcome and introductions
- A hands-on group review of preliminary schematics (design) for the four project alternatives
- Update on neighborhood meetings that are taking place this fall.
- Your ideas on the public meeting planned for December 4, 2012
- Introduction of the community questionnaire for the Harbor Bridge Project
- Public comments
- Meeting summary and plans for next meeting.

For more information on the Harbor Bridge project, visit our website at **cctxharborbridgeproject.com.** The Harbor Bridge Feasibility Study, Citizens' Advisory Committee and Technical Advisory Committee information, community questionnaire, and other project information can be found there.





## Texas Department of Transportation Corpus Christi District

U.S. 181 Harbor Bridge Project

Environmental Documentation and Schematic Development

**Technical Advisory Committee Meeting** 

October 18,2012





## Welcome

District Engineer

Victor E. Vourcos, P.E.

Harbor Bridge Project Manager

Texas Department of Transportation

Corpus Christi District Office



## Today's Agenda

- Welcome and introductions
- A hands-on group review of preliminary schematics (design) for the four project alternatives
- Update on neighborhood meetings that are taking place this fall.
- Your ideas on the public meeting planned for December 4, 2012
- Introduction of the community questionnaire for the Harbor Bridge Project
- Public comments
- Meeting summary and plans for next meeting.



## **TAC Ground Rules**

- Facilitated open discussion among committee members and project team members. Everyone is encouraged to participate.
- To ensure that all committee members have an opportunity to speak, please be respectful of our time limits.
- Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting and will be given an opportunity to provide comments at the end of the meeting.



## Harbor Bridge Project Reasonable Alternatives





## **Neighborhood Meetings**

- Listen to community members, show design drawings and latest project information
- Seven planned; two completed

- CC Beach Assn: 9/20

St Paul's: 10/15

Kelsey Memorial: 10/23

Garcia Arts Center: 11/5

Oak Park Elementary: 11/8

Portland Community Ctr: 11/12

Refinery Row: to be scheduled





## **Community Survey**

- Give local residents an opportunity for input on the Harbor Bridge project
- Gather information on neighborhoods/communities potentially impacted by proposed replacement of Harbor Bridge
- May be completed on paper or online at:

ccharborbridgeproject.com

 Information gathered by survey to be used in preparing draft environmental impact statement



## **Public Meeting**

#### **Harbor Bridge Public Meeting**

- Date: Tuesday, December 4, 2012
- Location: Solomon Ortiz Center (tentative)
- Format: Open house, presentation, comment session
- Content:
  - Presentation of preliminary designs for project alternatives
  - Opportunities for public content



## **Meeting Summary**

- Parking lot items
- Topics/information needs for next meeting?
- Meeting times/locations?

Thank you for your participation





#### **Technical Advisory Committee Meeting**

Harbor Bridge Replacement Project
Improvements to US 181 at the Harbor Bridge over the Corpus Christi Ship
Channel

October 18, 2012 – 2:30 – 4:30 pm Oveal Williams Activity Center, 1414 Martin Luther King Drive, Corpus Christi, TX

#### **Meeting Summary**

#### **Display Items**

- 1. Preliminary design drawings (schematics) on an aerial photo background
- 2. Preliminary right-of-way lines for the four reasonable alternatives

#### Welcome and introductions

Victor Vourcos, TxDOT project manager for the Harbor Bridge Project, opened the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting, welcomed participants, and asked each member to introduce themselves. He introduced the project team and then introduced the meeting facilitator, Susan Springer. Fifteen TAC members signed in at the meeting and were introduced. There were two members of the public in attendance.

Ms. Springer reviewed the TAC meeting agenda and meeting ground rules. She explained the format of the meeting—group discussions of each of the four alternatives based on a review of the design drawings.

## Hands-on group review of preliminary schematics (design) for the four project alternatives

TAC members were divided into four separate groups to review and discuss the four alternatives, one at a time. Two project team members sat at each table to facilitate and take notes on the table discussions. To initiate the table conversation, the table facilitator asked TAC members the following questions:

- 1. What effect (positive and/or negative) would this alternative have on your neighborhood:
  - a. How you get into and out of the neighborhood (going to schools, shopping, downtown Corpus Christi)?
  - b. The residences in the area?

- c. The local recreational facilities?
- d. The churches in the area?
- e. The schools in the area?
- f. The environment in the area (e.g., air, water, green spaces)?
- g. The overall character of the area?
- 2. Can you think of anything or anyone else that this alternative might affect?
- 3. Are there any other issues associated with this alternative that TxDOT should consider?
- 4. Based on what you're learned today, which alternative would you prefer and why?

#### Results of table discussions

#### Red Alternative:

In general, the red alternative was viewed in a positive light. TAC members noted that this alternative would provide better access to the Ortiz Center and would offer new opportunities for economic development and different land uses in the entertainment district. Possible creation of a boulevard in this area would eliminate existing barriers to the American Bank Center, Whataburger Field, and other bayfront entertainment destinations. This alternative might enable the North Beach area to become a tax reinvestment zone.

In the opinion of TAC members, the red alternative would keep the Washington Coles neighborhood intact, would minimize the taking of private property, and might allow for buildings to be located beneath the elevated bridge structure. This alternative also would allow for the possibility of cruise ships calling on the Port of Corpus Christi. TAC members expressed the belief that this alternative would provide a better transition between a new bridge and the Crosstown Expressway.

TAC members also noted that this alternative would keep traffic away from the wastewater treatment plant and appears to be safer because it eliminates curves. They also noted that the red alternative would eliminate the need to close the aquarium parking lot.

Many of the negatives associated with this alternative have to do with the northern limit of the project (which actually applies to all four alternatives). TAC members stressed that TxDOT should not make the Beach St. exit an afterthought and indicated that there is a need to separate truck and tourist traffic in this location to avoid congestion. Several TAC members also indicated that this alternative would require drivers to have to travel farther to get to the entertainment district (when headed southbound over the bridge). One individual suggested that the red alternative would reduce tourists' ability to see the

bay from the bridge and others questioned why a new bridge structure would have to be so high.

Some TAC members questioned the noise and smell that would be associated with the red alternative, as well as the air quality effects. They also noted that they believed this alternative might divide neighborhoods.

Other issues that were discussed was how mitigation would be handled, the morning lineup of trucks coming from the Joe C. Fulton Trade Corridor onto US 181 N, and the new refinery tanks that are located near the red alternative. One TAC member raised the issue of how using property for non-monetized use would affect the area around the red alternative.

#### Orange Alternative

TAC members raised both positive and negative issues associated with the orange alternative, which generally was considered to be slightly less favorable than the red alternative.

Positive effects of the orange alternative included the fact that it would open the downtown with a boulevard and has the potential to provide a gateway to downtown Corpus Christi. It would provide good connectivity with other roads and would be consistent with the current location of the bridge. The orange alternative would provide a view of the aquarium from the bridge (important to tourism) and offer a connection to Bayview Cemetery as a tourist attraction, as well as to Artesian Park, according to TAC members.

TAC members noted that this alternative is beyond the acceptable separation distance from an explosive and flammable hazard as defined in the U.S. Housing and Urban Development guidebook. It would also leave Hillcrest intact, and would have fewer impacts on the Sports, Entertainment, and Arts District.

The negative effects, according to TAC members are the orange alternative's proximity to Whataburger Field, potential shading of the water park, and impacts on the Washington Coles neighborhood and EJ communities, including the continued separation of Washington Coles from downtown amenities. Some TAC members believe that this alternative would potentially displace more people, impact St Paul's United Methodist Church and TC Ayers pool, and create a barrier between Whataburger Field and the convention center. They noted that this alternative would create an incentive to people to leave Northside neighborhoods.

Other issues raised in association with this alternative are the height of the bridge (why so high?) and the absence of some access ramps because of the height of the structure. TAC members also noted that bays and estuaries might be affected by the orange alternative, along with the Resaca lift station (Broadway wastewater treatment plant).

#### **Green Alternative**

In general, the green alternative was viewed in a more negative than positive light by TAC members.

The positive effects of the green alternative according to TAC members would be that this alternative would be less expensive, would require less construction, and would cause less displacement and disruption than the other alternatives. This might make it easier to sell to the community. It represents the status quo because it would have minimal impact on the Washington Coles neighborhood, would avoid churches and schools, and generally would have less impact on the local area (including residents and neighborhoods along the Crosstown Expressway).

However, TAC members noted that this alternative has numerous negative effects. These include the current lack of continuity with other roadways and reduced access to downtown Corpus Christi (especially from Portland), as well as continued isolation of the Northside neighborhoods. In general, TAC members expressed their opinion that this alternative would not address safety issues, would make it more difficult to get into the entertainment district, and would not allow the widening of the ship channel to allow larger ships to enter the Port of Corpus Christi.

TAC members also indicated that this alternative would have a negative effect on the business district in North Beach and more impacts on the local businesses than the red alternative.

#### **West Alternative**

In general, TAC members considered the west alternative to have the most negative effects and to be the least desirable of the four alternatives.

The positive effects of this alternative would be that it would open up Port property and would have fewer impacts on residents. It would remove some barriers between neighborhoods and would open up the Northside neighborhood for development. It would provide cruise ship access to the Port of Corpus Christi, would form a buffer between the refineries and neighborhoods, and would help reestablish Hillcrest.

TAC members identified a number of negative effects including their belief that this alternative would make it more difficult to access downtown Corpus Christi or North Beach, would reduce the view of the bay from the bridge, and would have sharp curves moving north to south. They also indicated that they thought this alternative would be more costly, would impact wetlands in North Beach, and would present safety and security issues because of its proximity to the refineries.

TAC members noted that the west alternative could have a negative effect on tourism, generally is disconnected from the city, and could create construction issues over the disposal area. A number of TAC members indicated that the west was their least preferred alternative.

#### Update on neighborhood meetings taking place this fall

Nancy Gates reviewed the neighborhood meetings currently taking place. The objective of these meetings, held throughout the project area, is to listen to community members, show design drawings and latest project information, and have people complete a community survey.

Seven of these meetings are planned and two have been completed:

CC Beach Association: 9/20

St. Paul's: 10/15

Kelsey Memorial: 10/23Garcia Arts Center: 11/5Oak Park Elementary: 11/8

Portland Community Center: 11/12Refinery Row: to be scheduled.

Meetings have been well publicized through direct mailers (postcards), posters and flyers displayed in various community buildings and meeting places, church bulletins, and posters on local buses. The pastor of St. Paul's church organized a group that distributed meeting flyers throughout the Northside community.

TAC members were encouraged to invite community members to participate in these meetings and were given posters to place in appropriate locations.

#### **Community Survey**

The project team has developed a community survey designed to give local residents an opportunity for meaningful input on the Harbor Bridge project. The information gathered by the survey will be used in completing the community impact assessment for the Harbor Bridge Environmental Impact Statement.

The survey may be completed on paper or online at the project website (ccharborbridgeproject.com)

#### Public meeting planned for December 4, 2012

A public meeting for the Harbor Bridge Project will be held on December 4, 2012 at a location to be determined. The Solomon Ortiz Center is a potential meeting location

because it was used previously for the public and agency scoping meetings. This meeting will be used to gather additional public input on the preliminary design drawings that were reviewed by the TAC and CAC.

#### Meeting summary and plans for next meeting

The next TAC meeting will be held in the first quarter of 2013.





## **Harbor Bridge Replacement Project Enters Next Phase**

The Texas Department of Transportation - Corpus Christi District has begun the next phase of its project to replace Harbor Bridge. According to the recommendations of a Feasibility Study that TxDOT completed in 2003, the nearly 50-yr-old Harbor Bridge is approaching the end of its useful life. A steel bridge over salt water, Harbor Bridge will need increasing amounts of costly maintenance as it ages. The replacement of Harbor Bridge presents an opportunity to address steep slopes, sharp curves, and lack of shoulders on the existing structure. Furthermore, as larger ships begin entering the Corpus Christi Ship Channel, they

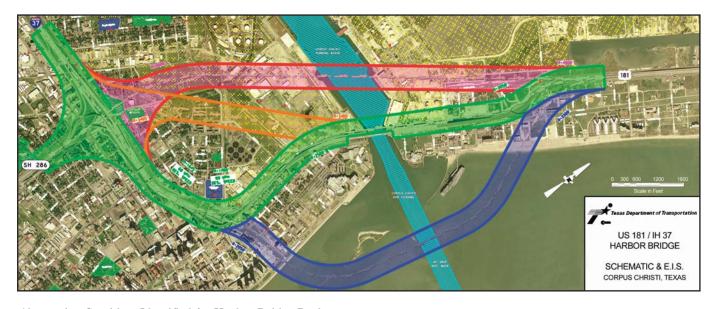
will require higher clearances than the existing bridge offers.

#### Four Harbor Bridge Alternative Corridors Evaluated During Feasibility Study

In the Feasibility Study, four alternative corridors were evaluated for replacing Harbor Bridge. As shown on the map, the green alternative follows the current route of the bridge. The blue alternative follows the path of the current southern approach to the bridge but then continues out into Corpus Christi Bay, avoiding the existing Northside neighborhood and Port facilities. The orange alternative is an extension of the Crosstown Expressway but returns to an

alignment (route) parallel to the existing Harbor Bridge across the Corpus Christi Ship Channel. The red corridor alternative would provide the most direct connection between the existing IH37/SH286 (Crosstown Expressway) interchange and U.S. 181 north of the Ship Channel.

The Feasibility Study identified the fourth corridor as the preferred corridor for further study. An advantage of this corridor identified in the study is that this corridor would enable a new bridge to be built without the sharp curves and steep approaches of the existing Harbor Bridge, which would enhance safety. *Continued on page 2* 



Alternative Corridors Identified for Harbor Bridge Replacement

## **Harbor Bridge Replacement Project (cont.)**

This alternative also was identified as being the most compatible alternative with the City of Corpus Christi's future development plans.

The preferred corridor is approximately 3,000 feet west of the existing Harbor Bridge. Although this corridor is about 600 feet wide, the actual path of the bridge and its approaches would be approximately one-fourth of that width.

The other alternatives were ranked lower than the preferred corridor for various reasons including safety, greater adverse environmental impacts, and incompatibility with future local development.

#### Environmental Documentation/Schematic Development Phase Now Underway

With the Feasibility Study completed, TxDOT is now working on two other key activities—preparing the environmental documentation that is required before the new bridge can be built and developing the preliminary engineering designs for a new bridge structure and its associated approaches and tie-ins to existing roadways.

Although the Feasibility Study identified a preferred corridor, TxDOT will consider the other alternatives, including a no-build alternative, as it prepares the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project. Over the next year, TxDOT and its consultants will be gathering and evaluating information on possible environmental impacts associated with building a bridge in various locations within the identified corridors. This process began during the Feasibility Study, but will be carried out in more detail during this phase of the project.

The first step in the EIS process was to hold "scoping" meetings with

other government agencies interested in the Harbor Bridge, and with the public. These meetings, held this past June, were designed to solicit ideas on what TxDOT should consider as it conducts its environmental investigations. For instance, are there specific landmarks or structures that should be avoided? Are there neighborhood considerations that might have been overlooked? Are there other corridors that should be considered? This kind of information will help TxDOT decide what to look at in more detail while preparing the EIS.

## Possible Bridge Alignments and Designs to be Developed

With the information from the scoping meetings, TxDOT's consultant engineers have begun looking at possible alignments and designs for the new bridge within the identified corridors. An early review from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the agency that must eventually approve the plan for Harbor Bridge, indicated that TxDOT should focus most of its attention on the two corridors to the west of the current bridge alignment. The other two corridors are not considered to be reasonable for meeting the purpose and need for a replacement for Harbor Bridge.

TxDOT will also be meeting with its consultant bridge architects, and with local architects, to start determining the most appropriate type of structure for the replacement bridge.

#### TxDOT to Consider Tolling of New Bridge

During this phase of the project, TxDOT will be considering the use of what are called "managed" lanes on the replacement bridge (see page 3). These lanes would require drivers to pay a toll and may be separated from the rest of the traffic either by pavement striping or a physical barrier. Managed lanes would allow drivers to move more quickly over the new bridge and through downtown Corpus Christi during times of traffic congestion. More importantly the money that such lanes would generate would mean that construction of the new bridge could begin as early as 2010 versus a construction start date as late as 2030 without this needed revenue (see project timeline on page 3).

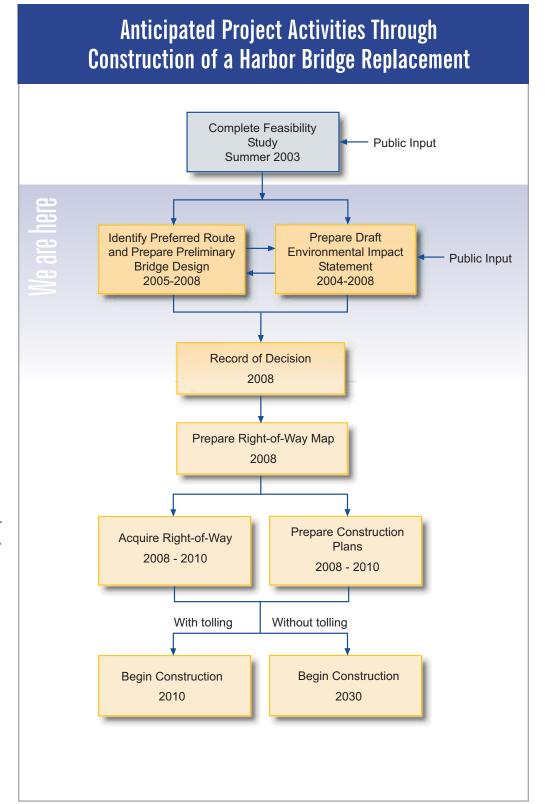
## What is an Environmental Impact Statement?

- Document required by the National Environmental Policy Act for large projects that use federal funds
- Provides detailed analysis
   of probable environmental
   consequences associated
   with the construction of the
   preferred alternative
- Examines the environmental consequences of the no-build alternative
- Includes public involvement at the beginning of the EIS development and throughout the process
- Requires coordination with state and federal regulatory agencies
- Must be approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

## Public Input Key Element in Study

As it was in the Feasibility Study, input from the public is a key component in the current phase of the project. During the feasibility study, TxDOT formed a Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) as a means of communicating with interested individuals and organizations. This group, which met three times, offered many ideas, opinions, and concerns, and helped TxDOT form a vision of what a replacement bridge should offer. In evaluating the alternatives, the project team used input from the CAC, from citizens at the public meetings, and from the maritime industry and the ship pilots who navigate the Ship Channel.

During the environmental documentation process, the CAC will again play a key role (see article on page 5). In addition, TxDOT will distribute newsletters such as this one, hold public meetings and a public hearing, and will have a project website where local citizens can get information as well as submit comments.



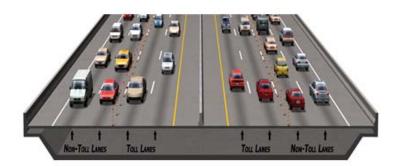
## **Tolling and Harbor Bridge**

TxDOT is considering the use of tolled, also known as "managed," lanes on the replacement for Harbor Bridge. Drivers would pay a small fee to drive in these lanes (one or more lanes in each direction).

The following information provides answers to some of the most commonly asked questions about the use of tolling.

## 1. Why don't our taxes cover the funding for a new bridge?

The traditional method of financing new roads and bridges has been revenue from the state and federal gasoline tax. Texans pay 20 cents per gallon in state taxes (same rate since 1991), and 18.4 cents in federal taxes (same rate since 1997). As shown below, TxDOT gets 59 cents for every state fuel tax dollar collected. As vehicles become more fuel efficient, motorists use less gas and therefore less revenue is collected. This, plus the fact that the gas tax has not kept pace with the increasing costs of highway construction and materials, means that TxDOT only generates enough money to pay for about a third of its transportation needs statewide.



**Typical Managed Lane Section** 

#### 2. What will tolling accomplish?

With a network of managed roads across Texas, including some in Corpus Christi, the state will be able to close the gap between available funding (from the gas tax) and the cost of needed improvements, such as a replacement for Harbor Bridge. What this means is that it will be possible to complete many new projects more quickly than can be done with the traditional approach for funding new roads and bridges.

## 3. Why would tolling be used on the replacement for Harbor Bridge?

As explained above, the money generated by tolls would provide additional funding that TxDOT

needs to begin construction of the new bridge much earlier than would be possible without this funding. The project timeline shown on page 3 of this newsletter shows the projected bridge construction schedule with and without the use of managed lanes for tolling.

## 4. How would TxDOT determine the amount of the toll?

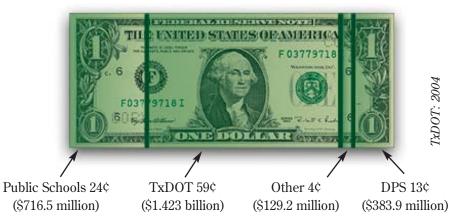
TxDOT would determine the exact amount of the toll on the basis of the projected future traffic across the bridge and the costs of constructing and maintaining the bridge.

## 5. How would these managed lanes work on the new bridge?

As shown in the figure above, one or more "managed" lanes on the new bridge would be separated from the other lanes by either pavement striping or physical barriers. Traffic in these managed lanes would move more swiftly during times of congestion, thus giving drivers an opportunity to reduce their travel times. However, using the managed lanes would always be voluntary; no one would be forced to use these lanes.

The method of collecting tolls in the managed lanes has yet to be determined.

#### How is state fuel tax spent?





#### Harbor Bridge Citizens' Advisory Committee (Corpus Christi) Members (Confirmed as of 15 August 2005)

Kelly Arkadie Betty Black Harold Branch Frank Brogan Andrew DuArté Kirk Fauver Dr. Manuel Flores The Honorable Henry Garrett, Mayor of Corpus Christi Rudy Galvan Tom Galyon Michael Gunning **Bud Harris** Albert Hinojosa George Hodge Shirley Jordan Councilmember Bill Kelly, City of Corpus Christi Esther Knowles Lorenzo Knowles The Honorable David Krebs, Mayor of Portland Scott Kucera Waunell Madison The Honorable John Edward Marez, City Council Member Thelma Morgan Roland Mower Tom Niskala Margie Rose Tom Schmid

Gloria Scott

David Seiler

Pat Suter

Manuel Tagle

Lamont Taylor

Norma Urban

Roger TenNapel

The Honorable Terry Shamsie,

**Nueces County Judge** 

Citizens' Advisory Committee Will Continue to Play Key Role in Project

Since public involvement is so important in determining the future of Corpus Christi's bridges, TxDOT formed a Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) shortly after the Feasibility Study began. Membership on the committee was open to anyone with an interest in the study and a commitment to attend a series of meetings over the next two years.

The CAC's mission is to offer the community an opportunity for a timely exchange of information with TxDOT. TxDOT will present information on potential plans for a replacement bridge as it becomes available, and will solicit the ideas and reactions of committee members.

#### Two CACs in This Phase of Project

During this phase of the Harbor Bridge project, there will be two CACs—one in Corpus Christi and one in Portland. The two locations will make it easier for committee members to attend meetings near their home or place of business. Both of these committees will have similar meeting agendas, although each committee will also focus some of its attention on issues of particular interest to its

In the past, CAC members have provided valuable input to TxDOT in many areas. For instance, they have shared their ideas about what a replacement for

particular location.

Harbor Bridge should offer and what the advantages and disadvantages of various corridor alternatives might be. CAC members have also provided valuable insights into where and when public meetings should be held, as well as how best to reach out to the wider community with study information.

#### First CAC Meetings Set for Sept. 27, 28

The first CAC meetings of 2005 will be on Tuesday, September 27th at the Oveal Williams Senior Center, 1414 Martin Luther King Dr., in Corpus Christi, and on Wednesday, September 28th at the Portland Community Center, 2000 Billy G Webb, in Portland. Both meetings will run from 6 - 8:30 p.m.

A list of the individuals who already are serving on the Corpus Christi CAC is shown in the box at the left. If you are interested in participating in one of these committees, please contact Victor Vourcos, TxDOT Project Manager at 361-808-2378 or VVOURCOS@dot.state.tx.us, and let us know on which committee you would like to serve.



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TxDOT Corpus Christi 1701 S. Padre Island Drive Corpus Christi, TX 78416 phone: 361-808-2378

fax: 361-808-2407

email: vvourcos@dot.state.tx.us

TxDOT Corpus Christi District 1701 S. Padre Island Drive Corpus Christi, TX 78416

# NEWS from the Bridge

A Newsletter from the Texas Department of Transportation Corpus Christi District April 2006

## Public Meeting to be Held on April 25

Please join us for a public meeting on the replacement of the Harbor Bridge and route alternatives. This meeting, to be held on Tuesday, April 25, 2006, offers the community a chance to learn about:

- The latest developments in the Harbor Bridge replacement project;
- Options for financing the new bridge;
- The alternative alignments under consideration for the new bridge and its approaches; and
- A preview of an upcoming Bridge Design Guideline Workshop for the community.

During the open house at the beginning of the meeting, you may visit and ask questions at information stations on the environmental documentation process, financing options for the new bridge, public involvement, the bridge design process, and the proposed bridge alignments. TxDOT and its consultant team will make a presentation on these same topics immediately after the open house and you may offer your suggestions during the public comment session that wraps up the public meeting.

We look forward to seeing you on April 25.

#### You are invited to an **Open House and Public Meeting on** The Replacement of the Harbor Bridge and **Route Alternatives**

Tuesday, April 25, 2006 Open House: 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. TxDOT Presentation: 6:30 - 7:15 p.m. Public Comment Session: 7:15 - 8:00 p.m. Oveal Williams Senior Activity Center 1313 Martin Luther King Dr. Corpus Christi, TX

For more information, call Victor Vourcos at TxDOT: 361-808-2378

## Citizens' Advisory **Committee Meet**

Corpus Christi and Portland citizens who have signed up to be members of the Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) for the Harbor Bridge Replacement project have met twice in the last eight months.

The CAC was initially established during the feasibility study phase of the Harbor Bridge project to offer the community an opportunity to learn about the project as it develops and to offer their ideas during this process. Membership is open to anyone with an interest in the project and who is willing to make a commitment to attend several meetings a year for a couple of years.

The CAC meets in two locations— Corpus Christi and Portland—to make it convenient for those who live on both sides of the Corpus Christi Ship Channel. (continued on page 2)



CAC members learn about project status during the March 2006 CAC Meeting in Corpus Christi

## **Preliminary Engineering Design Continues to Evolve**

Since our last newsletter was published in September 2005, TxDOT and its consultant, URS Corporation, have been making progress toward identifying possible alignments for the new bridge and its approaches.

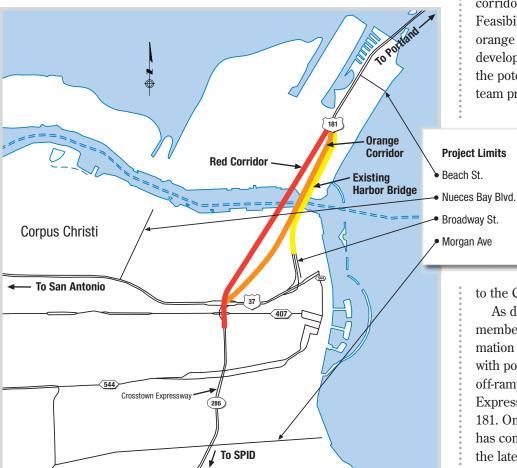
At the end of the feasibility study phase of the project in 2003, four possible bridge corridors were identified. Two of those corridors were not feasible for further consideration because they do not meet the requirements for a new bridge (e.g., they do not alleviate safety issues or they create new problems in terms of environmental effects).

Therefore, TxDOT is focusing its efforts on possible alignments in two corridors—identified in the Feasibility Study as the red and orange corridors (see map). After developing a preliminary version of the potential alignments, the TxDOT team presented these alternatives to

representatives of the City of Corpus Christi and the Port of Corpus Christi in January of this year. With feedback from these entities, TxDOT made a few changes in the alignments and then presented them

to the CAC meetings in early March.

As described previously, CAC members provided valuable information by noting issues associated with potentially changing on- and off-ramps along the Crosstown Expressway (SH 286), I-37, and U.S. 181. Once again, the design team has considered these comments in the latest version of the potential alignments that will be presented for public comment at the public meeting on April 25.



Harbor Bridge project limits for both orange and red corridor alternatives

## Citizens' Advisory Committee (continued from page 1)

At the meeting in late September 2005, CAC members learned about the status of the Harbor Bridge project and offered their suggestions on upcoming project activities. In early March 2006, the CAC met again, this time to talk about potential financing options for the new bridge, the cur-

rent status of the project, and an upcoming design guideline workshop for the local community (see article, page 3).

At the March meeting, CAC members got a chance to look at the drawings of the alternative alignments, including the proposed new

interchange with the Crosstown Expressway (SH 286). They were able to voice their opinions regarding proposed changes in access including the removal or relocation of ramps and the closing of some city streets.

# Design Guideline Workshop Coming up in May

In early May, the community will have a chance to begin helping to determine the "look" of a new bridge to replace the Harbor Bridge. Many valuable ideas about the new bridge have already come from community members during CAC and other meetings.

Now local residents will be able to think about what a new bridge should look like and how it should best be integrated into the local setting. Should the new bridge be a symbol of the Corpus Christi area as the Harbor Bridge is, and, if so, what sort of symbol would be most appropriate?

To give the entire community a say in the new bridge, a Bridge Design Guideline Workshop will be held on May 11 at the Ortiz Center in Corpus Christi. Nationally renowned bridge designer, Miguel Rosales, and URS Corporation's National Director for Major Bridges, Steve Stroh will be on hand to lead the workshop presentations and discussions. Miguel is president and principal designer for RGA, a transportation architecture and engineering firm based in Boston, MA.





Each of the orange and red alternative bridge cooridors has a different span length for a new bridge. These different lengths affect the design of the new bridge and associated approaches.

The workshop will run from 3 - 8 p.m. Everyone is welcome to come at any time during those hours to look at exhibits, ask questions of the bridge designers, and record a comment. At 4 and 6 p.m., the bridge designers will make a presentation explaining the various bridge design possibilities for a Harbor Bridge replacement, and will ask some questions of those in attendance. These questions will include the following:

- What structures and buildings are representative of the Harbor Bridge area?
- What features of the existing Harbor Bridge are valuable/attractive?
- Should the new bridge stand out or blend in with the surroundings?
- What visual elements of the new bridge would be important to you?

Even if you can't attend the workshop, you may participate in the design process by going to the Harbor Bridge Replacement Project website at www.harborbridgereplacement.com. Beginning May 11, you can complete an online survey that will show you some example bridge types and allow you to communicate your ideas about what a new bridge should look like. This survey will be available until the end of May. Similarly, you may also send written comments on the potential bridge design to TxDOT by the end of May.

Beginning in early June, the bridge designers will review and compile all of the community comments on bridge design. At the next public meeting for the project, they will present their findings and request additional public input. Watch future newsletters and the project website for the date and time of the next public meeting.

# Status of Environmental Documentation Activities

Work on the environmental documentation portion of the Harbor Bridge Replacement project also has been taking place while the preliminary engineering design has been underway. In fact you may have seen some of the consultant team as they conducted a historic resource survey early in 2006.

This survey is part of the information gathering effort needed to prepare the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the new bridge. The goal of this effort is to identify and evaluate all the possible environmental issues, including socioeconomic effects, associated with building a new bridge in any of the alternative alignments being considered.

The project team is currently planning to complete a draft EIS by late fall 2006. This draft document must be submitted to the Federal Highway Administration and TxDOT for review and revision. Sometime in the spring of 2007, the draft document will be available for the public to review and comment on during a public comment period and a public hearing.

Specific dates for the public comment period will be published in the newspaper, in a future edition of this newsletter, and on the Harbor Bridge Replacement website (www.harborbridgereplacment.com)

## For more information on the Harbor Bridge Replacement Project, contact:

Victor Vourcos, P.E. TxDOT Corpus Christi 1701 S. Padre Island Drive Corpus Christi, TX 78416 phone: 361-808-2378 fax: 361-808-2407 Help Us Design Our New Bridge
at the
Design Guideline Workshop for the
Harbor Bridge Replacement

Thursday, May 11, 2006 Open House: 3 p.m. - 8 p.m. Presentations: 4 p.m. and 6 p.m.

> Solomon Ortiz Center 402 Harbor Drive Corpus Christi, TX 78401

For the latest information on the Harbor Bridge Replacement Project, visit our website at:



www.harborbridgereplacement.com

TxDOT Corpus Christi District 1701 S. Padre Island Drive Corpus Christi, TX 78416



# **Public Scoping Meeting to Address Harbor Bridge Project's Expanded Geographical Limits**

In early 2007, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and TxDOT decided to extend the geographical limits of the Harbor Bridge project to more fully address issues associated with how a possible new bridge and its approaches would connect with existing roadways. This means that the project now has expanded project and study limits, as shown on the map

on page 3. Any project right-of-way acquisition and construction would take place within the **project limits** only; the study limits are areas that may be affected by the project in terms of traffic, but will not undergo any new construction associated with the Harbor Bridge project.

As shown on the map, the new project limits are as follows: (continued on page 2)

# Please Join Us for a **Public Scoping Meeting on the Expanded Project Limits for the Harbor Bridge Project**

Thursday, May 17, 2007 Open House: 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. TxDOT Presentation: 6:30 - 7 p.m. Public comment session: 7 - 8 p.m. Oveal Williams Senior Activity Center 1414 Martin Luther King Drive • Corpus Christi, TX

For more information, call Victor Vourcos at TxDOT: 361-808-2378

Those interested in attending the meeting who have special communication or accommodation needs are encouraged to contact the district public information officer, Frances Garza at 361-808-2231 at least two days before the meeting. Because the public meeting will be conducted in English, any requests for language interpreters or other special communication needs should also be made at least two days before the public scoping meeting. TxDOT will make every reasonable effort to accommodate these needs.

# What is the Harbor Bridge Project?

May 2007

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), Corpus Christi District, is determining whether the Harbor Bridge, which spans the Corpus Christi Ship Channel at U.S. 181, should be replaced. A Feasibility Study completed by TxDOT in 2003 concluded that US 181 and the Harbor Bridge must be improved to maintain a safe and efficient transportation corridor.

The Harbor Bridge project is now in the environmental documentation/schematic development phase. With substantial public input, TxDOT is now preparing an **Environmental Impact Statement** that evaluates several potential alignments for a new bridge, as well as a "no-build" scenario (leaving the current bridge in place).

In 2007 the project was expanded to include improvements to SH286/Crosstown Expressway.

## **General Project Timeline**

- Public involvement throughout project
- Feasibility Study: completed in
- Environmental documentation and schematic development: 2004 - 2009

# Public Scoping Meeting (continued from page 1)

the northern limit is the US 181 and Beach Avenue interchange located north of the Corpus Christi Ship Channel but south of the Nueces Bay Causeway: the southern limit is the SH 286 and SH 358 (South Padre Island Drive) interchange: the eastern limit is the Interstate Highway (IH) 37/US 181 intersection with Shoreline Boulevard; and the western limit is the IH 37 and Nueces Bay Boulevard interchange. The new project limits total approximately 7.5 miles in length from north to south along US 181 and SH 286, and 2.1 miles in length from east to west along IH 37.

The new study limits are as follows: the northern limit is the US 181 and SH 35 interchange just south of Gregory; the southern limit is the SH 286 (Crosstown Expressway) and SH 358 (South Padre Island Drive) interchange; the eastern limit is Shoreline Boulevard; and the western limit is the IH 37 and SH 358 (North Padre Island Drive) interchange.

Because of the expansion of the project area, TxDOT will be holding a public scoping meeting on May 17 to enable the local community to learn more about the expanded project and study limits, and to provide

comments about the Harbor Bridge project.

During the open house at the beginning of the meeting, you may visit and ask questions about the Harbor Bridge project and look at detailed maps showing the expanded project and study areas. TxDOT and its consultant team will make a presentation immediately after the open house and you may offer your suggestions during the public comment session that wraps up the public scoping meeting.

We look forward to seeing you on May 17.

# TxDOT Holds Informal Neighborhood Meetings for Those in Expanded Project Area

During the last week in April 2007, TxDOT held two informal neighborhood meetings specifically for those who live and/or work in the expanded project area along SH 286 (Crosstown Expressway). About 50 people attended these

meetings to learn about how the Harbor Bridge project might possible affect an area of the Crosstown Expressway near their place of business or residence.

TxDOT representatives and their consultant team were on hand to

review the status of the project and to answer questions. Those in attendance had numerous questions about possible changes in access to the Crosstown Expressway, potential use of managed lanes (with tolls) in addition to the existing traffic lanes, and various right-of-way issues.







Harbor Bridge Project and Study Limits

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fax: 361-808-2407

email: vvourcos@dot.state.tx.us

Victor Vourcos TxDOT Corpus Christi District 1701 S. Padre Island Drive Corpus Christi, TX 78416

# Harbor Bridge Project has Restarted

Work on Harbor Bridge Project has resumed after a hiatus of several years. This project consists of proposed improvements to US 181 at the Harbor Bridge over the Corpus Christi Ship Channel from Beach Avenue (on US 181) to Morgan Avenue on SH 286. The Federal Highway Admini stration (FHWA) is the lead Federal agency for this project and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is the joint lead agency.

In 2010, TxDOT's administration determined that the Harbor Bridge improvements previously discussed with the community during a 2007 public meeting would no longer

include managed lanes (tolled lanes) on US 181 or SH 286 as had been proposed at that time. Therefore they decided that the project and study limits for the Harbor Bridge project would be reduced to correspond to the original project limits that were first introduced during a public meeting in 2005 (see map on page 2).

The map illustrates the four possible alternatives for a corridor in which a new bridge could be constructed to replace the existing Harbor Bridge. These alternatives were identified, with input from local stakeholders and the public, during a

Feasibility Study completed in 2003.

July 2011

The current phase of the Harbor Bridge Project is the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and conceptual designs for a bridge alignment. The purpose of the EIS is to describe the potential effects of a bridge replacement on the physical, biological, and social elements in the project's environment. During the EIS process, TxDOT will evaluate the effects of locating a new bridge (and associated approaches) in various possible alternative alignments, including a "no build" alternative (leaving the existing bridge in place).

# Please Join Us for a Public Scoping Meeting on the Harbor Bridge Project

Tuesday, August 9, 2011

Open House: 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

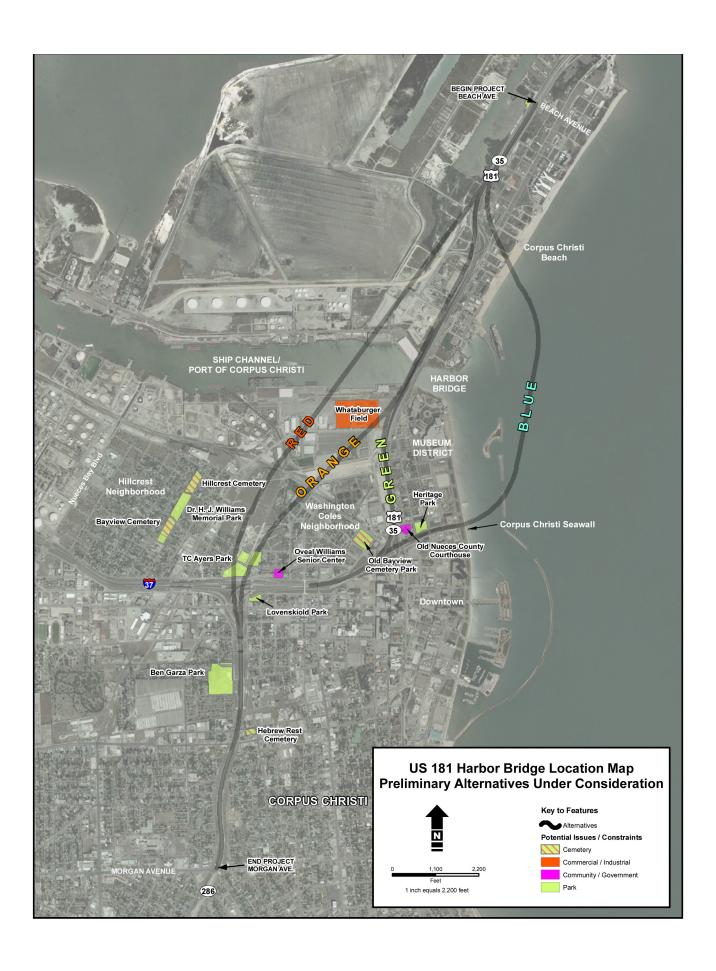
TxDOT Presentation: 6:30 – 7 p.m.

Public comment session: 7 – 8 p.m.

TxDOT Corpus Christi District Office—Training Center,

1701 S. Padre Island Crive, Corpus Christi, TX

Those interested in attending the meeting who have special communication or accommodation needs are encouraged to contact the district public information officer at 361-808-2481 at least two days before the meeting. Because the public meeting will be conducted in English, any requests for language interpreters or other special communication needs should also be made at least two days before the public scoping meeting. TxDOT will make every reasonable effort to accommodate these needs.



## Public Involvement is Key Element of EIS

A key component of the EIS is public and stakeholder input, including extensive coordination and information-sharing among public officials and local residents about possible environmental consequences, as well as scientific investigations into key pertinent issues. Public input is heavily considered throughout the six phases of an EIS:

- Scoping (identification of issues to be studied)
- 2. Screening potential alternatives
- 3. Analyzing and evaluating a short list of alternatives in detail
- Comparing alternatives and preparing the Draft EIS (DEIS) by comparing the impact of each alternative on the environment
- Distributing the DEIS to federal, state, and local agencies, and interested members of the public
- Responding to comments, revising, and preparing the Final EIS (FEIS) that will identify the Preferred Alternative.

In June and July 2011, FHWA and TxDOT published a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register and Texas Register, signifying that the EIS process was beginning for the Harbor Bridge Project. The first step in that process is scoping to obtain information about the alternatives being considered and to consider any new alternatives suggested by agencies or the public. A public scoping meeting will be held on the evening of August 9, 2011 at TxDOT's Corpus Christi District office (see meeting announcement in this newsletter) to

gather input from local residents. Federal, state, and local agencies will have their own scoping meeting earlier that same day.

During the public scoping meeting, TxDOT will offer information on why the Harbor Bridge project is being conducted and how the EIS process will work. A draft need and purpose for the project, as well as the draft Coordination Plan for the project, will be presented for public review and comment. The draft Coordination Plan documents how the lead agencies (FHWA and TxDOT) will interact with other agencies and the public throughout the EIS process. This Coordination Plan is meant to promote an efficient and streamlined process, and good project management through coordination, scheduling, and early resolution of issues.

A second set of public/agency scoping meetings will be held later in 2011. At that time TxDOT will report on the changes made in the Coordination Plan and project need and purpose, and alternatives to be considered as a result of public and agency suggestions.

Public involvement for the Harbor Bridge project involves much more than just scoping, however. This newsletter is one way in which TxDOT is communicating information about the project. A project website (www.ccharborbridgeproject.com) is now online with additional project information and will be updated regularly to reflect project process. It is also a place for you to enter comments on the project and to request that you be added to the project mailing list.

In addition, several public meetings are planned for the future as well as more informal meetings with local stakeholders and the public including a Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) and a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The CAC will be comprised primarily of local residents and businesses in the project area whereas the TAC will consist of local elected officials, civic organization representatives, and others. More information on opportunities to participate in these committees will be available shortly.

For the latest information on the Harbor Bridge Project, visit our website at:

www.ccharborbridgeproject.com

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email: Victor.Vourcos@txdot.gov

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# S from the Bridge www.ccharborbridgeproject.com

# Harbor Bridge Project Moves Forward with Four Alternatives

The news from the Harbor Bridge project is that the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have completed an initial review of six alternatives, or corridors where a potential replacement for the Bridge might be located (see map on pg 2). The Tunnel and Blue alternatives have been eliminated from further consideration after a process that analyzes how all six possible alternatives meet the project's Purpose and Need statement.

#### How did we get to this point?

In August and October of 2011, TxDOT held two public "scoping" meetings on the Harbor Bridge Project. These meetings were part of the scoping process for the project, which is part of the environmental review (in this case, an Environmental Impact Statement or EIS) required for projects that will receive federal funding. Scoping is an open process that gives the public and other Federal, state, and local agencies an opportunity to suggest alternatives for the proposed project, and to identify important issues that should be considered during the preparation of the EIS document. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is the law that describes how an EIS must be developed and documented.



Public scoping meetings held in 2011 gave the public and agencies a chance to suggest project alternatives and identify important issues.

As a result of the 2011 scoping meetings, members of the public suggested two new alternatives for replacing the Harbor Bridge: a West Alternative and a Tunnel Alternative, as shown on the map. These new alternatives were added to the existing alternatives (green, blue, orange and red) already under consideration.

# Alternatives compared to project Purpose and Need

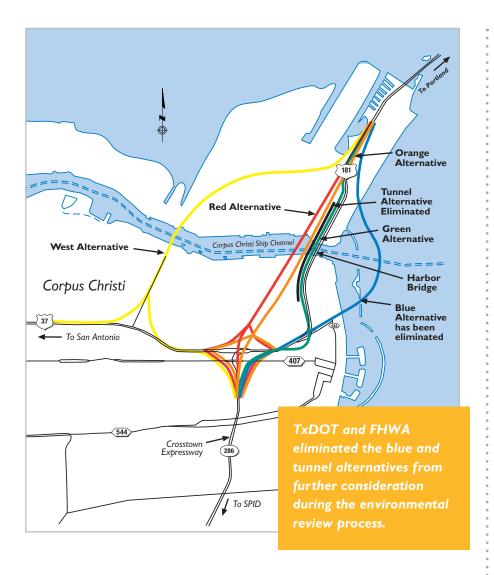
After all of the alternatives were identified and mapped, TxDOT's/ FHWA's next task was to complete the project's Purpose and Need Statement, and analyze each alternative to see how well it met that statement. Any alternative that didn't meet the project's Purpose and Need would not need to be considered during the environmental review process. The project's Purpose and Need statement must clearly identify the need(s) of the proposed project and the problem that the project is to correct, and justify why federal funds should be spent on the proposed project.

TxDOT and FHWA used input from agencies and the public in preparing the Purpose and Need statement for the Harbor Bridge Project. The two primary needs are defined as follows:

## I. To maintain the long-term operation of the Harbor Bridge.

The current bridge is constructed of steel and requires routine cleaning and painting to minimize the corroding effects of salt-laden air, yearround windy conditions, and warm temperatures. In addition, the

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Harbor Bridge is what is called a fracture critical structure, which means that the key structural elements are not supported by any additional or redundant elements. This doesn't mean that the existing bridge is unsafe, only that there is no second line of protection in the bridge's design.

The structural rehabilitation needed to extend the life of the existing Harbor Bridge another 15 – 20 years began in 2010. Over the past 30 years, maintenance costs have exceeded \$70 million and at least \$50 million (along with the need to close the bridge for an indefinite time for rehab work) is needed to keep the bridge in operation another 40 years.

2. To minimize safety risks caused by design deficiencies. The

Harbor Bridge doesn't meet current FHWA and TxDOT roadway and bridge design standards. For example, the existing Harbor Bridge and US 181 approaches do not have shoulders. Thus, traffic does not move freely even when minor traffic crashes and breakdowns happen on the bridge. In addition, the US 181 approaches to the Harbor Bridge are on a 5% vertical slope (five feet of rise for every one-hundred feet travelled). The current design standard is set at a maximum of 4% slope. When combined with curves on both the north and south ends of the existing bridge, this steep grade creates a situation where vehicles are travelling at downhill speeds and entering sharp "S" curves at faster-than-posted speed limits.

Certain ramp lengths do not provide enough adequate speed-up or slow-down distances to meet current design standards. In addition, US 181 southbound just south of the Harbor Bridge does not meet current design standards. While approaching downtown Corpus Christi on southbound US 181, motorists must decide whether to travel to downtown Corpus Christi, I-37/SH 286, or Staples Street from the same point on the highway. For drivers unfamiliar with the Corpus Christi area, this need to make a quick decision increases the likelihood of accidents.

Additionally, both US 181 (including the Harbor Bridge) and I-37 in the project area are designated major hurricane evacuation routes. US 181 is the primary evacuation route for San Patricio County and an alternate route to I-37 for the city of Corpus Christi. Given the design deficiencies just described, US 181 could become congested in the event of an accident or vehicle breakdown during an emergency hurricane evacuation.

# Four alternatives to be analyzed in draft EIS process

When all of the alternatives were analyzed by how they well they met these needs, both the tunnel (which would be located beneath the Ship Channel) and the Blue Alternative (which would be a crossing of the Ship Channel extending out into Corpus Christi Bay) did not meet the second need listed above. Neither of them would address the need to minimize safety risks because neither would meet TxDOT's requirements

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for hurricane evacuation routes. Therefore, TxDOT and FHWA concluded that only the red, orange, west, and green alternatives would be evaluated further during preparation of a draft EIS document.

This decision, along with the completion of the Purpose and Need statement, concluded the scoping process for the project. Although additional alternatives may be suggested at any time during the EIS

process, the current plan is to move forward with evaluating potential impacts of the four remaining alternatives and the No-Build Alternative (the alternative that would leave the existing Harbor Bridge in place).

In addition to the two needs described above, the Purpose and Need statement also includes three objectives that will be used to analyze the reasonable alternatives in the draft EIS. These objectives are:

- Provide the transportation infrastructure to expand the economic opportunities in the area;
- Consider the connectivity to the local roadway system; and
- Meet design-year capacity standards on US 181, including the Harbor Bridge, and consider projected future traffic demand.

# Advisory Committees meet twice so far in 2012

In January and then again in June 2012, the Harbor Bridge Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) and Harbor Bridge Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met to learn more about the project and to offer their opinions and ideas to TxDOT and FHWA.

The two advisory committees were established at the end of 2011 and will meet about three times a year at the Oveal Williams Senior Activity Center. Members nominated themselves or were nominated by others, and were approved by TxDOT.

The two groups have slightly different missions. The CAC was established to represent neighborhoods and neighborhood-based organizations, and advocacy groups, as well as regular Harbor Bridge commuters. CAC members promote awareness of the Harbor Bridge Project and keep TxDOT and FHWA informed about local community concerns and information needs regarding the project.

The TAC, on the other hand, is made up of individuals who represent the local municipalities, civic organizations, professional groups, and elected officials. They provide community feedback as well, but also offer additional insight into some of the more technical aspects of the project.

At the January CAC and TAC meetings, members learned about the status of the project and about the process being used to evaluate possible project alternatives. They offered suggestions about how TxDOT and FHWA can most effectively engage the local community.

At the June meetings, members were the first to learn of TxDOT/FHWA's decision to eliminate two project alternatives after they did not meet the project's Purpose and Need Statement, and to hear about the finalized project Purpose and Need statement. Committee members voiced their opinions on the alternatives and requested additional information.

The next round of CAC and TAC meetings will take place this Fall. At that time, members will be able to view and react to preliminary drawings of the remaining four alternatives. These drawings will give more detail on the footprint of each potential bridge replacement corridor. To



Citizen's Advisory Committee members offer community insight and opinions about the Harbor Bridge Project.

read more about CAC and TAC meetings (including meeting minutes and PowerPoint presentations), please visit our Harbor Bridge website at www.ccharborbridgeproject.com.

All CAC and TAC meetings are open to the public. Individuals are welcome to attend and are given an opportunity to make comments at the end of each meeting. A notice of the next CAC and TAC meeting date will appear on the Harbor Bridge website once that date has been set.

# What's coming up next?

TxDOT continues to prepare the draft EIS. This document will provide a detailed description of the proposed project, the purpose and need, reasonable alternatives, and the social, economic, and environmental setting as it now exists in the project study area.

For more information on the Harbor Bridge Project, or to be added to our mailing list, visit our website at ccharborbridgeproject.com or contact Victor Vourcos at Victor.Vourcos@txdot.gov or at 361-808-2378.

One of the most important portions of the document is the analysis of anticipated beneficial and adverse environmental, social, and economic effects of the reasonable alternatives. The "no-build" alternative is always included as a benchmark against which the impacts of other alternatives can be compared. The draft EIS is scheduled for completion by 2013.

- **Public involvement activities continue.** The Harbor Bridge website is updated whenever new information becomes available. The CAC and TAC will continue to meet about three times a year.
- Community "listening sessions" will be held as part of the community impact assessment. CAC members have been asked for names of groups that might be interested in communicating with TxDOT regarding neighborhood concerns about bridge replacement. Please contact Victor Vourcos if your organization would like to participate in these sessions, which will begin this Fall.
- A public meeting will be held in the late Fall of 2012 or early Winter of 2013. Check the next newsletter and the Harbor Bridge website for the announcement of that meeting.
- TxDOT is scheduling presentations to local neighborhood associations, civic groups, or other organizations. If you would like to schedule a presentation and question/answer session, please contact Victor Vourcos.

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# A Newsletter from the Texas Department of Transportation Corpus Christi District November 2012 The Bridge

ccharborbridgeproject.com

## **Public Meeting Notice**

# Please Join Us for a Public Meeting on the Harbor Bridge Project

Review with staff the preliminary designs for four project alternatives

Visit with TxDOT historians about historic resources in the project area

Tuesday, December 4, 2012 Open House: 5 - 6:30 pm TxDOT Presentation: 6:30 - 7 pm Public Comment Session: 7 - 8 pm

Congressman Solomon P. Ortiz International Center Nueces Room 402 Harbor Drive, Corpus Christi, TX

If you have special communication or accommodation needs, please contact the district public information officer at 361-808-2481 at least two days before the meeting. Because the public meeting will be conducted in English, any requests for language interpreters or other special communication needs should also be made at least two days before the public meeting. TxDOT will make every reasonable effort to accommodate these needs.

For additional information, contact Victor Vourcos at 361-808-2378 or visit our website at ccharborbridgeproject.com.

# What's New?

# Preliminary Alternative Designs Available for Viewing at Public Meeting

At the public meeting on December 4, 2012, you have an opportunity to look at and comment on the preliminary designs for the four alternatives now being considered for the proposed replacement of the existing Harbor Bridge and compare them to the No-Build Alternative (leaving the existing bridge in place). TxDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have not yet made any decisions about which alternative is preferred (including the No-Build) and your input will be considered as they move forward with the project.

Each of these proposed designs is still preliminary and subject to change, but shows a basic footprint for the red, green, orange, and west alternatives (shown on the map on page 2). They give enough detail that you can see the proposed on- and off- ramps and the streets, as well as local areas and communities that might be affected by that alternative. If you live in or own a business in the project area, you can find your street and property on these design drawings.

Public meeting participants will be encouraged to carefully study the alternative maps and point out any features that might be missing, as well as ramps and streets that provide access points to neighborhoods

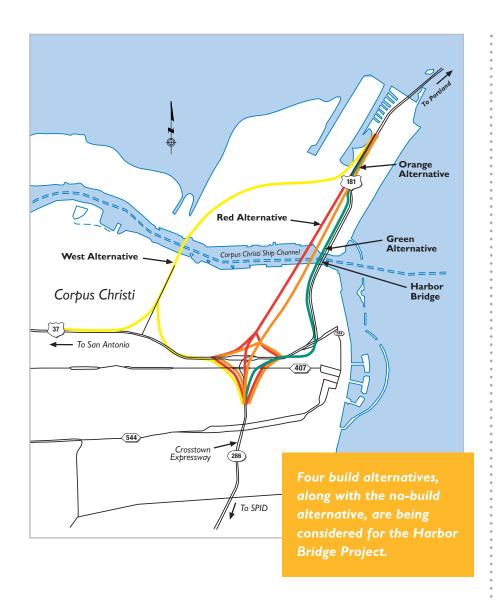
and businesses or local landmarks that should be considered. During preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which is now underway, project team members will be identifying and analyzing the potential effects of each alternative (including the No-Build) on the local community and environment. With input from the public, they can have a more accurate picture of just how each proposed and the No-Build alternative might affect the local community.

Also available at the meeting will be visualizations of the proposed bridge alternatives. These visualizations will enable someone to see what an alternative would look like if he/she were standing in a particular spot in a neighborhood.

Visualizations have been created for all four possible build alternatives. The No-Build alternative would look the same as it does now.

The public meeting will include an open house (during which participants may review the alternative maps and visualizations, as well as other information), a short presentation by TxDOT, and a public comment session. Those with special needs or who need Spanish translation are urged to contact TxDOT before the meeting (see meeting ad for specifics).

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# Project Area Historic Resources Being Identified

Another part of the EIS process for the Harbor Bridge project is to identify potential historic properties in the proposed project area in order to comply with the National Historic Preservation Act's Section 106 review process. These properties are buildings, houses, or other structures that are at least 50 years old.

Project team members, working closely with TxDOT historians, are identifying historic properties in the project area and will be determining whether any of the four project alter-

natives might have any potential adverse effects on the properties. Using this process, project team members are also identifying ways to avoid, minimize or mitigate any adverse effect if they are identified.

Project team historians will be at the public meeting on December 4th to talk with anyone with an interest in one or more of the historic properties. Anyone with a concern or other interest can sign up to be on an "interested parties" list for further communications with the project team.

# Neighborhood meetings give Local Residents a Chance to Communicate with Project Team Members

From September to November of this year, TxDOT and its consultants have been holding a series of neighborhood meetings to find out what community members are thinking about the proposed replacement of the Harbor Bridge. Designed as informal question and answer sessions, these small group meetings, which have attracted nearly 200 people, have been held in eight locations in the project area:

North Beach Association (North Beach)

St Paul's United Methodist Church (Northside)

Kelsey Memorial United Methodist Church (Central)

Garcia Arts Center (Crosstown West)

Oak Park Elementary School (Westside)

Portland Community Center

Oveal Williams Senior Center

St. Theresa's Catholic Church (Dona Park/Academy Heights).





Community members had many ideas about proposed project alternatives.

"These kinds of meetings help TxDOT and their consultants to get a better understanding of the local community and give us a chance to answer questions about the project in an informal setting," says Victor Vourcos, TxDOT project manager for the Harbor Bridge Project. "We're happy to meet with any group that has questions or would like to share their opinions about our proposed project."

The neighborhood meetings serve a dual purpose: they are part of the project's public involvement activities and also provide important information for the Community Impact Assessment that is being developed as part of the EIS. This assessment will profile each potentially affected neighborhood, determine any potential impacts of the project on that neighborhood, and identify any necessary solutions.

Complete a Community Survey and voice your opinions about the Harbor Bridge Project and how it might affect your neighborhood. Fill out one online at www.ccharborbridgeproject.com or request a paper copy from Victor Vourcos at Victor.Vourcos@txdot.gov or at 361-808-2378.



Those who attended the recent meetings had many questions and comments for the Harbor Bridge Project team. Many of the questions had to do with proposed on and off ramps, the proposed height of a new bridge and bridge approaches, and

the schedule for the project, as well as how individual project alternatives would affect neighborhoods, churches, and recreational areas.

Another important part of the community meetings was the introduction of the Harbor Bridge community survey. This survey is intended to gather information about potential impacts of the project alternatives on local residents and business owners. If you have not filled out one of these surveys, please go online and fill one out at ccharborbridgeproject.com or ask us for a hard copy (see contact information in this newsletter). We want to hear from you.

# **CAC** and **TAC** Met Again in October

The Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) and Technical Advisory Committees (TAC) met again in October 2012. These committees were formed to enable local community members to easily interact with TxDOT and the FHWA during the Harbor Bridge project. They provide valuable feedback on proposed project plans and serve as a link between the project sponsors (TxDOT and FHWA) and the local community. For instance, when TxDOT wanted to know the best ways of reaching out to the community, CAC and TAC members offered suggestions about how public meetings could be adver-

tised and where the best meeting locations might be.

At the October meetings, CAC and TAC members got an opportunity to look at the preliminary designs for the project alternatives. Each group got a chance to review the proposed alternative designs in detail and offered their opinions regarding possible positive and negative effects of each design alternative, as well as any other possible issue associated with each alternative including the No-Build.

For more information on the CAC and TAC meetings, visit our website at ccharborbridgeproject.com



CAC members reviewed the preliminary designs for the four proposed project

alternatives.

# What's coming up next?

▶ TxDOT will continue to prepare the draft EIS. You may see members of our project team in your community as they collect information on historic resources, hazardous materials, and other natural and human resources. The draft EIS is scheduled for completion by 2013.

For more information on the Harbor Bridge Project, or to be added to our mailing list, visit our website at ccharborbridgeproject.com or contact Victor Vourcos at Victor.Vourcos@txdot.gov or at 361-808-2378.

- **Public involvement activities continue.** The Harbor Bridge website is updated whenever new information becomes available. The CAC and TAC will continue to meet about three times a year. The next CAC and TAC meetings will take place during the first quarter of 2013.
- **Expect another public meeting--this time a Design Guideline Workshop—in 2013.** This workshop will enable the community to look at potential bridge designs and offer ideas and comments about which ones seem most appropriate for this community while comparing them to the No-Build Alternative.
- TxDOT welcomes requests for presentations from local neighborhood associations, groups, or other organizations. If you would like to schedule a presentation and question/answer session, please contact Victor Vourcos.

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# **Public Meeting Draws Community Interest**

On the evening of December 4, 2012 at the Solomon Ortiz Center, more than 130 members of the public and stakeholders got their first chance to look at and review the preliminary designs for the four proposed build alternatives for replacing the Harbor Bridge. (The no-build alternative is also being considered and this would involve leaving the bridge as it is now.)

As Lonnie Gregorcyk, Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) District Engineer for the Corpus Christi District Office explained to the crowd, "No decisions regarding alternatives have been made. This process is what helps us arrive at the right decision. This is a big project for our community."

The purpose of the public meeting was to provide updated information on the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) being prepared for the Harbor Bridge Project. For the December 4 meeting, this included introducing the latest version of the preliminary designs and offering an opportunity for TxDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to receive comments on the designs and the project in general. In addition, the Historic Resources Survey Report prepared for the project was available for people to review and offer comments.



### Six Proposed Alternatives Reduced to Four

The previous Harbor Bridge public meetings consisted of two rounds of public and agency scoping meetings (the process used to gather input on a project's Purpose and Need and proposed project alternatives at the beginning of a project) held in 2011. After the second of these scoping meetings, six proposed build alternatives were identified: the Red. Orange, Green, Blue, West, and Tunnel alternatives. The first four proposed alternatives came from a Feasibility Study completed in 2003 and the remaining two were proposed by members of the public.

According to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which established the requirements for conducting an EIS, the six proposed alternatives had to be compared to the Purpose and Need for the project before the EIS could move forward. Specifically, each proposed alternative had to be evaluated to see if it addressed maintaining the long-term operation of a US 181 crossing of the Corpus Christi Ship Channel and the safety risks caused by design deficiencies. After this evaluation, TxDOT and FHWA determined that the Tunnel and Blue alternatives did not meet this Purpose and Need because they could not adequately address safety risks primarily having to do with hurricane evacuation. Therefore these two alternatives were eliminated from further consideration in the EIS.

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# HB Public Meeting (continued)



TxDOT and FHWA eliminated the blue and tunnel alternatives from further consideration during the environmental review process.

In addition to listening to a presentation and reviewing the preliminary designs for the four remaining proposed alternatives (the Red, Orange, Green, and West alternatives [as shown on the map]), meeting participants looked at visualizations of these alternatives. For instance, suppose you are standing at the corner of Palm Street and Broadway Avenue looking west down Broadway toward Port Avenue. You could see a picture of what the proposed Red and Orange bridge replacement alternatives would look like in the distance. Visualizations of the four proposed alternatives were presented from various vantage points in Corpus Christi.

Other information presented at the meeting included the results of a survey of local historical properties. This survey was completed in the late fall of 2012 to identify properties in the Harbor Bridge project area that are listed or eligible to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. TxDOT historians and their consultant were on hand to answer questions about this part of the environmental process for the proposed bridge replacement (see article on historic properties on page 3).

Those who attended the meeting had various comments and questions for the project team. For instance, they wanted to know why TxDOT

had eliminated two of the six proposed project alternatives; how much the project will cost, and how long it will take to complete. Questions asked during the public comment session were answered as they were asked. A summary of the public meeting as well as copies of the handouts and exhibits can be found on the Harbor Bridge website at ccharborbridgeproject.com.

Since the December 4 meeting, TxDOT has been further refining the proposed preliminary designs for the four Harbor Bridge alternatives. In response to public input received at and after this meeting, project design engineers have come up with ideas for improving driver access to local city streets. These changes would mainly affect the proposed red and orange alternatives, and would result in fewer impacts on local community resources and the environment.

# We want to hear from you!

Your opinions and feedback on the Harbor Bridge project are essential to ensuring that any proposed bridge replacement reflects the community's ideas. To learn more about the Harbor Bridge project, follow us on our website at ccharborbridgeproject.com. Harbor Bridge project team members are available to speak with your organization, your neighborhood group, or you at your request. To contact the TxDOT project manager, Victor Vourcos, please visit the website or call 361-808-2378.

# Historic Property Survey

# Part of Environmental Study

For this project, TxDOT, in cooperation with FHWA and the Texas Historical Commission (THC), is consulting with the public about the effect of the proposed project on properties that are listed or are eligible for listing on the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places. The National Register is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation and is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources.

What does this mean for the Harbor Bridge project? Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act has certain requirements that must be met. To meet these requirements, TxDOT had a historic resource survey performed by qualified architectural historians. Specifically they looked at local properties and asked:

- Is the property associated with historically significant events, people, architecture, cultural activities, etc?
- Is the property at least 50 years old?
- Does the property look similar to the way it has looked in the past?

To identify historic properties in the project area, TxDOT historians conducted extensive local research, mainly at the Corpus Christi Public Library's Local History and Genealogy Room as well as a review of previous survey reports for the City of Corpus Christi at the THC. In addition, field surveyors visited Corpus Christi three times to identify and document historic resources with a map and photographs.

The result of this work is the Historic Resources Survey Report, now available at the Corpus Christi Public Library (805 Comanche) and on the Harbor Bridge website (ccharborbridgeproject.com), which identified 851 historic-age (over 45 yrs old) buildings or properties in the project area. Of those, 25 resources are listed or were determined eligible for listing on the National Register and 20 of 25 were determined to be individually eligible for the National Register.

Individuals and organizations with a particular interest in the identified historic properties can become consulting parties and provide their opinions directly to TxDOT. These groups and individuals include the Nueces County Historical Commission, the Corpus Christi Landmarks Commission, the Historic Bridge Foundation, and property owners or neighbor associations whose property might be directly affected by one or more of the proposed alternatives.

Additional information about the Section 106 process can be found on the Harbor Bridge website.

# Community Impact Analysis



In October and November of 2012, you may have seen, heard about, or attended one of the eight Harbor Bridge neighborhood meetings or listening sessions held throughout the project area. TxDOT held these meetings to collect general information about the neighborhoods and communities potentially affected by the proposed replacement of Harbor Bridge. The meetings allowed local residents to talk directly with the Harbor Bridge project team about the project and how they believed it might affect their neighborhood.

The opinions expressed by community members both in person and in a survey distributed at the meetings will become part of the community impact analysis and included in the EIS now being developed for the proposed project. More than 200 people shared their views with TxDOT and this feedback is being considered as the project moves forward through the environmental analysis. For example, it is important for the project team to understand what people consider to be the most important qualities of their neighborhoods and how the proposed bridge replacement might affect those qualities.

More information on these meetings may be found on the Harbor Bridge website at ccharborbridgeprojet.com.

# What's coming up next?

• CAC and TAC meetings in July of 2013

For more information on the Harbor Bridge Project, or to be added to our mailing list, visit our website at ccharborbridgeproject. com or contact Victor Vourcos at Victor.Vourcos@txdot.gov or at 361-808-2378.

# **CAC/TAC** meetings



Two groups of people who are playing key roles in the Harbor Bridge Project met in October 2012. The Harbor Bridge Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) and the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) held their third meeting of 2012 at the Oveal Williams Center. Members of these committees represent community and local stakeholder interests, and offer TxDOT feedback on project issues and developments. In turn, they bring community concerns to the committee meetings so that the project team can better understand how the proposed project might affect the local area.

During the October CAC and TAC meetings, committee members reviewed the preliminary designs for the four proposed build alternatives and offered their opinions about the positive and negative aspects of each of these alternatives. During each of the meetings, members were divided into groups and given a chance to ask project team members about the details of the preliminary designs. Each individual had a chance to react to what he or she was seeing and to communicate his/her opinions as well as thoughts on how the larger community might react to the preliminary designs.

Committee members also made suggestions about the best ways to raise awareness of the December 4 public meeting. TxDOT and FHWA followed through with many of these valuable ideas including using public service radio advertisements, posting meeting information in local businesses, and sending postcards to those living in the project area.

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US 181 Harbor Bridge Project
Corpus Christi North Beach Association Meeting
The Breakers Condominiums
4242 Gulfbreeze Boulevard, Corpus Christi, Texas
Thursday September 20, 2012
5:00 – 7:00 PM

Preparation: Advertisement for the meeting was accomplished via the following methods:

- The meeting was a regularly-scheduled meeting of the Corpus Christi Beach Association (CCBA),
   which TxDOT and consultant staff attended
- CCBA president Betty Black also invited business owners and other interested parties outside of the CCBA membership

#### **Staff Attendance:**

- Consultant Staff: Jason Buntz, Emily Reed, Elyse Schmitt, Carol Scott, Doreen Harrell
- TxDOT: Victor Vourcos, Chris Amy

#### **Meeting Summary:**

Approximately 25 North Beach community members were in attendance as well as City planning staff members and City Council Member Chris Adler. Contact information was collected through a sign in sheet (see attachment), and information regarding the project community survey was distributed both as a hard copy at the meeting, as well as through a link to the online webpage (<a href="www.ccharborbridgeproject.com">www.ccharborbridgeproject.com</a>). The format of the meeting was the presentation of a general overview of the project followed by questions and comments. The main goal of the meeting was to gain a better understanding of the community as well as to answer attendees' questions about the project.

A general overview of the Harbor Bridge project was presented. The need and purpose of the project were clearly stated followed by a short summary of each proposed build alternative. The four proposed build alternatives were depicted on large board graphics, including information regarding potential road and ramp closures associated with the design of the proposed project and other changes in access. Meeting attendees were informed of the ongoing effort to gather information about each potentially impacted community through a survey. The survey seeks to document the degree of community cohesion as well as project-specific concerns for the Community Impact Assessment (CIA). The CIA is being developed as part of the environmental impact statement and will characterize each potentially affected community, analyze impacts, and identify potential project benefits. A large map of the North Beach community area, as defined in the CIA, was also presented in order to gather feedback on identified community facilities and resources.

After the 20 minute presentation concluded, community members were asked to respond to the information with questions, comments and concerns in a discussion format. Generally, members were in support of the project, but expressed concerns about the potential disruption of traffic patterns and increased commute time and access to downtown and North Beach attractions associated with one or more of the alternatives.

Following large group discussion regarding the Harbor Bridge project, the association meeting agenda moved to other issues related to North Beach. Attendees discussed concerns related to North Beach and the city projects, such as clean up of the beach and addressing the homeless population in the community.

After the conclusion of the formal meeting, a few individuals approached the photographs to draw attention to areas on the map that were considered valuable to the community.

#### **Questions and Comments:**

Q: Where does West Alternative tie-in? A: Nueces Bay Blvd.

Q: Do all alternatives tie in at Beach Ave? A: Yes.

Q: Any other North Beach exits? A: Preliminary design includes one exit, Beach Ave.

C: Important to have more than one southbound on-ramp from North Beach. Traffic will become a major back-up of people trying to get back to CC.

C: West Alternative veers people further away from tourist attractions and would not support bicycle and pedestrian access to Aquarium and Lexington from Downtown.

Q: What's the plan for the Joe Fulton Corridor? Will there be an exit ramp to Joe Fulton from the new bridge? A: Engineers are considering an alternative ramp that would tie in to Joe Fulton. It would be included in construction plans as alternative route during construction.

Q: Enough room for fly-over bridge exit to Burleson? A: Engineers will consider that.

C: Pedestrians would not want to walk way out along the West Alternative. People want a connection from downtown to North Beach.

Q: How vested is the Port in the project: A: The Port is in favor of the proposed project. Explained that Port Industries (different group than the Port Authority) has come forward with a statement indicating that from a business standpoint a new bridge is not a factor.

Q: Once new bridge is built, will the existing bridge be removed. A: Yes.

Q: Is demolition of old bridge included in the cost? A: Yes.

Q: Proposed on-ramp from North Beach? A: Yes, at Beach Ave.

C: (On behalf of John Sloan and residents of the Harbors) suggest change to Red alternative, moving it west of the Rincon Channel, hence less impact on the residents. A: This would require the replacement of or substantial modifications to the Nueces Bay Causeway.

C: Red alternative also good because opens area to the east of the bridge for more tourism and attractions, cruise industry and enhanced real estate opportunities.

C: How long would it take to get to downtown from North Beach using direct connectors under the proposed alternatives? A: A bit longer time depending on the alternative, but safer in terms of highway design.

Q: Where would the exit be from North Beach to CC downtown? A: For the Green Alternative, you would exit at Staples Street and take the turnaround. The Red and Orange Alternatives would have you take a direct connector to I-37 at the Crosstown interchange. For the West Alternative, you would take the direct connector to I-37 at the Nueces Bay Boulevard interchange.

Q: Consider a pedestrian/bicycle path that is elevated above road instead of next to traffic. A: Engineers are considering options for bike/ped access in cooperation with the City.

Q: Is the reason for a higher bridge in order to accommodate larger ships? A: Yes, but that is not a part of the project Need and Purpose. It would be a part of the objective to provide transportation infrastructure to expand economic opportunities in the area.

Q: Isn't Port interested in attracting bigger ships? A: Yes, but this is not a primary purpose of the project.

Q: Sounds like doing a lot for pedestrians – thought about additional exits for pedestrians? A: Yes, no detailed plans yet.

C: Most people here live north of Beach Ave., this project will ultimately have major impact on our day-to-day existence.

C: Making elevation higher allows more materials to be shipped into port instead of using smaller ferry ships.

C: Port gets more ships, they get more money.

Q: What is the plan for routing southbound during construction? Looks challenging. A: Will include Joe Fulton Corridor. Depending on the alternative selected, there may need to be special plans for traffic during construction (particularly for Green and Orange).

Q: Any idea of the time frame: how long? A: Design and EIS completed by 2014-2016. Construction 2020-2025.

Q: Is everything considered in cost you mentioned? A: Yes.

#### Q = Question from public; C = comment from public; A = response from TxDOT

US 181 Harbor Bridge Project
Northside Neighborhood Meeting
St. Paul United Methodist Church
1202 Sam Rankin Street, Corpus Christi, Texas
Monday October 15, 2012
6:00-8:00 PM

Preparation: Advertisement for the meeting was accomplished via the following methods:

- Post cards delivered along direct mail routes 28 & 29 (700 addresses) and to the St. Paul's mailing list
- Posters and flyers left at neighborhood churches, Oveal Williams Center, Coles High School,
   Northside Manor Apartments, Washington Head Start
- Posters placed on city buses
- Local news and radio stations advertised the event
- St. Paul sent 12 volunteers door to door in the Northside neighborhood extending to Hillcrest neighborhood. Volunteers reached 200 houses on Saturday October 13, 2012 distributing details on the Monday October 15<sup>th</sup> meeting.

#### **Staff Attendance:**

- Consultant Staff: Jason Buntz, Emily Reed, Elyse Schmitt, Carol Scott, Doreen Harrell, Fanny Chirinos (Spanish speaker)
- TxDOT: Chris Amy

#### **Meeting Summary:**

Approximately 30 community members attended the meeting. Displays included a poster for each proposed build alternative, a community poster highlighting the Northside neighborhoods, and a large-scale historic aerial photograph (1956) depicting the area before I-37 was constructed in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The main goal of the meeting was to gain a better understanding of the community as well as to answer attendees' questions about the project. Many attendees completed a community



survey and then proceeded to view the displays. The survey seeks to document the degree of community cohesion as well as project-specific concerns for the Community Impact Assessment (CIA).

The CIA is being developed as part of the environmental impact statement and will characterize each potentially affected community, analyze impacts, and identify potential project benefits. Information regarding the project community survey was distributed both as a hard copy at the meeting, as well as through a link to the online webpage (<a href="https://www.ccharborbridgeproject.com">www.ccharborbridgeproject.com</a>).

TxDOT made a short presentation on the current status of the project, the purpose of the meeting (as gathering input on community cohesion and concerns about the project), and the intent of the project community survey. Following the short presentations, there was a question and answer session, including the following questions and comments.

#### **Questions and Answers:**

Q: Is there any other way to not move people around and to not even have the project? I strongly disagree with the project. A: There are a few options in this case, there is an alternative that includes "No Build," in which case there would be routine maintenance of the bridge, but there would not be effects to the neighborhoods. This is one of the five options for the project.

Q: What is the time frame of the project? We have been hearing about the project for a decade, what makes this time different? A: Construction would not begin until after 2017 – this time frame depends on funding. TxDOT is working closely with the state legislature on funding sources.

Comment: Many people are interested in the design of the bridge and realize Harbor Bridge is an attraction; bridges can be an icon for the city and a tourist attraction.

Q: How does the bridge go over the refinery (referring to West Alternative)? Is this safe? What if there is an explosion in the area? A: This is something that is being taken into consideration. This alternative could not be eliminated based solely on the proximity to the refineries, but potential safety issues will be studied

Q: Are there bike paths proposed for the new structure? A: Yes, eastern side of each alternative will have a shared use path.

C: if the bridge follows the West alternative, I will not use the path – nowhere really to go, does not connect downtown with North Beach.

Q: What is it that you want to hear from the community, what do you want to hear from us? A: What are the positives and negatives of the alternatives and how do they affect your neighborhood and what areas are important to you.

Q: If the alternative passes all of the environmental regulations, who casts the vote to make the decision? A: A collective effort between TxDOT and FHWA.

Q: Is there anyone who opposes the structure? A: Yes, we have received both positive and negative feedback for replacing the bridge.

Q: If there is a start date after 2017, with all of the people affected, do houses and businesses need to be cleared from the right of way by that date? What happens to renters? A: No, the right of way acquisition process includes contacting affected property owners and working through the process with. The process for right of way acquisition would begin before the construction date. For a business, they would be compensated to relocate; for residents (owners or tenants), they would be compensated and assisted in relocation to ensure that decent, safe and sanitary housing is provided. If there is a major community resource that is affected, the resource would potentially be moved to a new location to serve the same purpose.

Q: Which of these alternatives is better for the neighborhood? A: Depends on your perspective on what constitutes a benefit for the communities.

C: Green or West would be best to keep the neighborhood intact.

Q: Are they going to make the bridge higher? A: Yes, not one of the needs of the project, but all of the designs could accommodate a 205' high bridge. We are working with the Coast Guard as a cooperating agency.

C: This seems like a good idea to bring in more ships to increase jobs in the port.

Q: You had mentioned earlier that an issue was putting the bridge over salt water is bad for the bridge; if the green alternative is in the same location wouldn't this be an issue? A: No, the bridge would be made of concrete which would not be affected by the salt water in the way the current steel structure is.

Q: When you get all of the feedback from us, there are people around the table making the decision, who is the "we" and how would the community know what decision is made? A: FHWA would publish the recommended alternative in the Federal Register and a Public Hearing would be held to receive public input. A court reporter will be present to officially record public comments.

#### Q = Question from public; C = comment from public; A = response from TxDOT

For the last portion of the meeting, attendees engaged in small group conversation with project team members and were invited to examine maps of the neighborhood and the four proposed build alternatives. Surveys were made available in English and Spanish as attendees signed in, and several surveys were completed during the meeting.

US 181 Harbor Bridge Project
South Central Neighborhood Meeting
Kelsey Memorial United Methodist Church
Education Annex
1610 Comanche Street, Corpus Christi, Texas
Tuesday October 23, 2012
5:00 – 7:00 PM

**Preparation**: Advertisement for the meeting was accomplished via the following methods:

- Post cards delivered along direct mail route 31 (436 addresses) and to the KMUMC mailing list
- Advertisement placed in KMUMC October newsletter
- Posters and flyers left at KMUMC, other neighborhood churches, the Salvation Army, Good Samaritan Rescue Mission, and Evans Elementary
- Posters placed on city buses
- Local news advertized the event

#### **Staff Attendance**

- Consultant Staff: Jason Buntz, Emily Reed, Elyse Schmitt, Carol Scott, Doreen Harrell, Fanny Chirinos (Spanish speaker)
- TxDOT: Victor Vourcos

### **Meeting Summary:**

Approximately 15 community members attended the neighborhood meeting held in the education building of Kelsey Memorial United Methodist Church. Attendees were primarily church members but also included a member of the Rockport Chamber of Commerce, a representative of the Port of Corpus Christi, and City of Corpus Christi staff. Displays included a poster for each build alternative, a community poster highlighting the South Central neighborhoods, and a large-scale historic aerial photograph (1956) depicting the South Central area before I-37 was constructed in the late



1950s and early 1960s. The main goal of the meeting was to gain a better understanding of the community as well as to answer attendees' questions about the project. Many attendees completed a community survey and then proceeded to view the displays. The survey seeks to document the degree of community cohesion as well as project-specific concerns for the Community Impact Assessment (CIA).

The CIA is being developed as part of the environmental impact statement and will characterize each potentially affected community, analyze impacts, and identify potential project benefits. Information regarding the project community survey was distributed both as a hard copy at the meeting, as well as through a link to the online webpage (<a href="https://www.ccharborbridgeproject.com">www.ccharborbridgeproject.com</a>).

The first hour of the meeting consisted of community members analyzing the posters and discussing their questions and concerns with TxDOT. General comments consisted of questions regarding displacement of businesses and facilities and the potential impact to the parking lot of the Kelsey Memorial Church. After the first hour concluded, a presentation was given by TxDOT to update the attendees on the status of the project as well as to answer questions. Community surveys in English and Spanish were available for the attendees as well as a meeting brochures and information booklets provided by TxDOT regarding right of way acquisition. Community surveys in English and Spanish as well as brochures were left at the church to be available to community members during the food drive on Saturday October 27, 2012. The surveys were stamped with a "please return to church office" for collection.

#### **Questions and Comments:**

- Q: What are other considerations besides cost, safety and maintenance? A: Public input, design standards and environmental effects.
- Q: What about the water park and baseball field? A: Alternatives were designed to avoid Whataburger Field; the water park is recent and has not influenced the design to this point.
- Q: Who will have the final word? A: After the EIS is completed, as a team, FHWA makes the decision.
- Q: Will FHWA pay for the project? A: Combination of state, federal and local money.
- Q: What type of bridge is easier to maintain? A: A majority concrete bridge will be better able to withstand the salt water environment with less maintenance than the existing steel structure.
- Q: Will the bridge be higher? A: We want to have a bridge that will serve the community for its 50-100 year life span. We are working with the Port and the MPO for input on the height, currently looking at about 200 ft.
- Q: How will this affect Kelsey Memorial Church? A: Red and Orange alternatives might take larger portion of parking lot than Green and West; none of the alternatives would displace the Church or the education building.
- Q: How would traffic affect the building (vibration)? A: Highway capacity would not be increased (no additional travel lanes). Having the highway closer to the building would not likely have substantial vibration impacts, but there could be an increase in traffic noise.
- Q: Have you explained ramp removal/access changes? A: Red and Orange traffic would exit further south on Crosstown for Leopard Street, and the Lipan Street and Comanche Street overpasses would

remain. For the Green and West Alternatives, existing Leopard Street exit would be eliminated and combined with the existing Comanche and Lipan Street exit, which would remain the same; Comanche and Lipan Street overpasses would be eliminated.

C: Comanche and Lipan Street are important for traffic, including pedestrians, going to and from Evans Elementary.

Q: MPO endorsing Red alternative, what does this mean? A: This is just one of the many project stakeholders documenting a preference of one alternative over others; FHWA/TxDOT have not identified a preferred alternative at this time. That decision will be made after the EIS is completed and reviewed by the public and resource agencies.

Q: When will the project be completed? A: Environmental clearance is expected by 2015; expected construction completion is 2023.

Q: Is FHWA decision final? A: Yes, they will formalize the decision by signing a Record of Decision following approval of the EIS.

Q: What about walking paths? A: We are considering a shared use path that would accommodate bicycles and pedestrians.

Q: Did the bridge originally have shoulders? A: We don't think so. Photographs from 1959 show no shoulders.

Q: Some alternatives would impact church parking – who is responsible for finding additional parking? A: After the preferred alternative is identified, the process would begin to contact owners of land that would be affected. In the case of the Green Alternative, the church would be offered a value for purchase of the parking lot land. The Church can enter into negotiation with TxDOT on the price; the goal would be to reach a fair market value. Once the payment is made, the Church/owners would have the option of finding additional parking. The process is different in the case of taking of a residential property. In this case, TxDOT would be responsible for helping to relocate the residents or tenants. Eminent domain is the last resort.

Q: What is the impact to the Aquarium? A: One impact would be a change in access.

Q: Are you going to mail surveys directly to homes? A: They are available at the meetings, in churches, and at the Oveal Williams Center; postcards have been mailed for meetings which also include the website address where the survey can be taken online.

Q: What is the threshold for deciding you have done enough to get survey responses? A: We will continue to hold meetings like these and ask community members to spread the word about the survey. If we are not getting enough responses, we may decide to pick a day to set up a booth in the communities. We are not looking for a target number of responses, since this is not a scientific survey, just information gathering. Once it is time to analyze the results in order to stay on track for the project deadlines, we will write up what we have.

C: A lot of residents are tenants in rented property and may not know about the meetings. A: Meeting advertisements were sent along postal delivery routes, so residents along the routes should receive the notices, regardless of whether they rent or own the residence.

Q: Have you contacted the local schools to distribute information? A: Yes, for example, children at Oak Park Elementary were sent home with information about the upcoming meeting in that neighborhood.

Q: Can we still have a pedestrian overpass here (at Comanche) if the overpass would be eliminated? A: Engineers will be looking into that option.

C: Consider the bus routes on SH 286 to preserve access to public transportation.

Q = Question from public; C = comment from public; A = response from TxDOT

US 181 Harbor Bridge Project Antonio E. Garcia Arts & Education Center 2021 Agnes Street, Corpus Christi, Texas Monday November 5, 2012 5:00 – 7:00 PM

Preparation: Advertisement for the meeting was accomplished via the following methods:

- Post cards delivered along direct mail routes 20 and 33 (789 addresses)
- Flyers were distributed to and posters were installed in churches, schools, city service locations, and select businesses in the area including Ben Garza Gym, San Luis Restaurant, Westside Business Association, St. Joseph Catholic Church, and others (620 flyers and 24 posters)

#### **Staff Attendance:**

- Consultant Staff: Jason Buntz, Emily Reed, Elyse Schmitt, Carol Scott, Doreen Harrell
- TxDOT: Victor Vourcos

#### **Meeting Summary:**

Approximately six community members attended the Westside neighborhood meeting in the Garcia Arts Center throughout the evening. Displays included a poster for each proposed build alternative, a community poster highlighting the Westside/Oak Park neighborhoods, and a large-scale historic aerial photograph (1956) depicting the area before I-37 was constructed in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The main goal of the meeting was to gain a better understanding of the community as well as to answer attendees' questions about the project. Attendees first completed a community survey and then proceeded to view the displays. The survey seeks to document the degree of community cohesion as well as project-specific concerns for the Community Impact Assessment (CIA). The CIA is being developed as part of the environmental impact statement and will characterize each



potentially affected community, analyze impacts, and identify potential project benefits. Information regarding the project community survey was distributed both as a hard copy at the meeting, as well as through a link to the online webpage (www.ccharborbridgeproject.com).

General questions were asked regarding proposed changes in access, potential effects to their homes or businesses as well as identifying key sites attendees regularly visit. Attendees also identified important resources outside of the Westside community boundary, which included the Salvation Army and Hebrew

Rest Cemetery. Major concerns expressed included ensuring the protection of Kelsey Memorial United Methodist Church, to preserve the value and history of the area and avoiding impacts to Corpus Christi Metro Ministries, which provides free meals and shelter to persons with disabilities, the homeless and the poor. Another attendee expressed concern for the Holy Cross Church located in the Washington Coles Neighborhood. The attendees did not express objections to the overall project.

US 181 Harbor Bridge Project
Westside / Oak Park Neighborhood Meeting
Oak Park Elementary School
3801 Leopard Street, Corpus Christi, Texas
Thursday November 8, 2012
5:00 – 7:00 PM

**Preparation**: Advertisement for the meeting was accomplished via the following methods:

- Announcements were sent home with students in parent packets for Oak Park Elementary and Driscoll Middle School students
- Post cards delivered along direct mail routes 20 (346 addresses)
- Flyers and posters were distributed to restaurants, stores, and key community locations including Cesar Chavez Academy, Bottomless Pit BBQ, USA Dollar Store, Westside Dental Center, and others (3,582 flyers/ 20 posters)

#### **Staff Attendance**

- Consultant Staff: Jason Buntz, Emily Reed, Elyse Schmitt, Carol Scott, Doreen Harrell, Fanny Chirinos (Spanish speaker)
- TxDOT: Christopher Amy

#### **Meeting Summary:**

Approximately 17 community members attended the Oak Park neighborhood meeting held in the Elementary School cafeteria. Attendees were primarily members of the Oak Park community interested in either learning about the project for the first time, or interested in an update on the project. Displays included a poster for each build alternative, a community poster highlighting the Oak Park neighborhood, and a large-scale historic aerial photograph (1956) depicting the Westside/Oak Park area before I-37 was constructed in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The main goal of the meeting was to gain a better understanding of the community as well as to answer attendees' questions about the project. Many attendees completed a community survey and then proceeded to



view the displays. The survey seeks to document the degree of community cohesion as well as project-specific concerns for the Community Impact Assessment (CIA). The CIA is being developed as part of the environmental impact statement and will characterize each potentially affected community, analyze impacts, and identify potential project benefits. Information regarding the project community survey was distributed both as a hard copy at the meeting, as well as through a link to the online webpage (<a href="https://www.ccharborbridgeproject.com">www.ccharborbridgeproject.com</a>).

The meeting consisted of continuous interaction between project staff and attendees, and a formal presentation was not given. Attendees identified important neighborhood resources, including Tom Graham Park. The majority of questions were in regards to the change in access to downtown and the entertainment district. Concern was expressed regarding the trend of business closures along I-37 in the Oak Park neighborhood as well as the proposed closure of the southbound SH 286 entrance ramp from Leopard Street. The comments did not include objection to the project itself; some attendees expressed the opinion that the project should be completed. Many attendees did not prefer the proposed West Alternative due to the distance away from the downtown area. Most attendees were in favor of the proposed Red Alternative followed by the Orange Alternative with recognition of both positive and negative aspects to each.

US 181 Harbor Bridge Project
Oveal Williams Senior Center Members Lunch
1414 Martin Luther King Drive, Corpus Christi, Texas
Thursday November 8, 2012
11:30 AM – NOON

Preparation: Advertisement for the meeting was accomplished via the following methods:

- Flyers were posted in the Oveal Williams Senior Center
- Announcements were made during the center's events and activities in advance of the meeting

#### **Staff Attendance:**

- Consultant Staff: Jason Buntz, Emily Reed, Elyse Schmitt
- TxDOT: Christopher Amy, Victor Vourcos

#### **Meeting Summary:**

The meeting occurred during the regularly scheduled lunch service for the members of the Oveal Williams Senior Center. Approximately 30 members were in attendance. The purpose of the meeting was to inform the members of the progress on the Harbor Bridge Project and to gather feedback regarding project or other concerns. A short presentation of the maps displaying four proposed alternatives was given and attendees were given the chance to take a



community survey; assistance in taking the survey from the consultant staff in attendance was provided as needed. The survey seeks to document the degree of community cohesion as well as project-specific concerns for the Community Impact Assessment (CIA). The CIA is being developed as part of the environmental impact statement and will characterize each potentially affected community, analyze impacts, and identify potential project benefits. Information regarding the project community survey was distributed both as a hard copy at the meeting, as well as through a link to the online webpage (www.ccharborbridgeproject.com).

The following questions were discussed after the presentation:

Q: Does this mean that the center would no longer exist? A: In the case of the Red or Orange proposed alternatives, right of way would be purchased from the City of Corpus Christi by TxDOT. The Senior Center building and the Health Clinic are in the proposed right of way for these alternatives and a

replacement site would need to be identified. The Green and West Alternatives would avoid the Senior Center.

Q: Have there been suggestions as to where the center would be if it were moved? A: There has not been a discussion on a proposed new location for the center; we would like to hear your feedback not only on the center but on the other areas that are important to you.

Q: What would happen to the Elliott Grant Homes [senior housing]? A: Based on current designs, the Grant Homes appear to be affected by the Red and Orange proposed alternatives; partial acquisition would be required if either of those routes were to be selected.

C: I do not live in this area; we come here because it is the nicest senior center in town, and it is relatively new. I think it would be a huge waste of money to take this new structure down, I am wondering why you would choose to take the center down if there is another alternative. Also, I am concerned with the impact to St. Paul; the church has been in the area for 128 years and is seen as a historical landmark and attraction and we need to preserve the history here.

C: The [Christus Spohn Northside] clinic serves many people in the Hillcrest neighborhood and most of the Northside. This would be a huge mistake to displace the clinic due to the fact that the people who use the clinic do not drive and depend on the close proximity to the neighborhoods.

Q: Would the West Alternative have the least amount of impact? A: We are currently in the evaluation process to determine the potential impacts for each proposed alternative.

C: The [wall] mural in this center is a key community value and we would want it to be preserved. The artist incorporated Egyptian style to reflect Black History and the community members contributed pieces of glass or decorations to place in the wall.

C: This center is important for Black History in the neighborhood and Corpus Christi.

Q: You talked about environmental impact, have you looked at the economic impact of these proposed alternatives? A: Yes we are studying many types of impacts including environmental justice, jobs, socioeconomics, etc.

Q: Would the Green Alternative be close to the new County Courthouse? A: No, the proposed Green Alternative would not impact the new courthouse.

Q = Question from public; C = comment from public; A = response from TxDOT

US 181 Harbor Bridge Project
Portland Neighborhood Meeting
Portland Community Center
2000 Billy G Webb Drive, Portland, Texas
Monday November 12, 2012
5:00 – 7:00 PM

Preparation: Advertisement for the meeting was accomplished via the following methods:

- Post cards delivered along direct mail routes 1-5 and 9 (3,800 addresses)
- Posters were installed and flyers distributed in local schools, and community gathering places such as Starbucks, Goodwill, City Hall, restaurants, Portland Community Center, Schools and others (5,450 flyers/ 47 posters)

#### **Staff Attendance**

- Consultant Staff: Jason Buntz, Emily Reed, Elyse Schmitt, Carol Scott, Doreen Harrell
- TxDOT: Victor Vourcos

#### **Meeting Summary:**

The neighborhood meeting for the Portland community provided an update on the four proposed alternatives and explained how each alternative would affect access to and from Corpus Christi. The meeting was held in the Portland Community Center; approximately 25 community members were in attendance. Many attendees were public officials. Displays included maps of the four proposed build alternatives. The main goal of the meeting was to gain a better understanding of the community as well as to



answer attendees' questions about the project. Many attendees completed a community survey and then proceeded to view the displays. The survey seeks to document the degree of community cohesion as well as project-specific concerns for the Community Impact Assessment (CIA). The CIA is being developed as part of the environmental impact statement and will characterize each potentially affected community, analyze impacts, and identify potential project benefits. Information regarding the project community survey was distributed both as a hard copy at the meeting, as well as through a link to the online webpage (www.ccharborbridgeproject.com).

After an hour of informal conversation, a presentation was given followed by a question and answer session.

The following questions, answers and comments were recorded during the session, which was primarily focused on questions about access:

Q: Will the new bridge be higher? A: Yes, the current bridge is 138 feet from the bottom of the bridge to the surface of water; the proposed height ranges to 205 feet.

Q: Would cruise ships be able to come into the harbor? A: Some smaller cruise ships could be able to enter with the proposed height, but not the largest cruise liners, which need 215 feet or greater.

Q: When will the bridge be built? A: Depending on funding and the review process, construction could begin as early as 2017 with an approximately 5 year construction timeline.

C: The community would like to see the economic benefits of increased shipping through the Port; we do have the deepest Texas port.

Comment from POCCA representative: The Port Authority believes 205' is the right height for the bridge. This is the same height limitation as the bridge at the Panama Canal.

Q: Will there be shoulders on the new bridge if there are breakdowns and for emergency vehicles? A: Yes, there will be shoulders and a shared use path for bicycle and pedestrian use.

Q: Many people work and live in Portland or Corpus Christi and the traffic counts are up. How would people access downtown on each of the proposed alternatives? A: A brief overview of the route a commuter would take from Portland to Corpus Christi was provided for each of the four proposed alternatives.

Q: Please explain the need to replace the bridge at all. Are you seeking consensus/support from stakeholder groups? A: The need for the bridge includes safety and the long term maintenance. The bridge has sharp turns that do not meet today's design standards. The bridge is made of steel and is prone to deterioration in the salt-laden air. Significant maintenance work would require the bridge to be closed or partially closed, causing traffic problems.

Q: Have you considered a ferry system? A: The limited number of vehicles a ferry could transport and projections for an even higher number of vehicles on the road would not allow for efficient traffic movement.

Q: Do cruise ships have to come under the bridge? A: Those types of details are not available.

Q: I am concerned about emergency vehicle access from Portland to Corpus Christi. A: We do take this into account. Morgan Avenue is important to access for several hospitals and provides a direct route, and all of the alternatives have shoulders to accommodate emergency access.

C: Current access to hospitals is via Shoreline – you need to maintain simple access from bridge to Shoreline.

Q: Once the Harbor Bridge is removed, who owns the land left and what will be done with the land? A: There may be multiple owners, including the State, to which the current US 181 right of way would revert back. It could be used for at-grade roadways.

Q: Is the new roadway going to be tolled? A: No.

C: Many people moved to Portland because of the direct access to downtown and the cultural district. I would rather go to Corpus Christi than to Victoria, and we want to prevent people from leaving Corpus.

C: [Portland Fire Chief] Emergency vehicle access would be better served with the Red or Orange alignments, than with Green.

C: The Joe Fulton Corridor should be designated as a Hazardous Cargo route to take those trucks off of US 181.

Q = Question from public; C = comment from public; A = response from TxDOT

US 181 Harbor Bridge Project
Refinery Row Neighborhood Meeting
St. Theresa Parish
1302 Lantana Street, Corpus Christi, Texas
Thursday November 13, 2012
6:00 – 8:00 PM

**Preparation**: Advertisement for the meeting was accomplished via the following methods:

- Post cards delivered along direct mail routes 07C039 and 08C040 (1,045 addresses)
- Flyers sent home from Gibson Elementary School in parent packets
- Announced at St. Theresa church services
- Posters displayed at the limited number of retail and public spaces in the area (750 flyers/ 6 posters)

#### **Staff Attendance**

- **Consultant Staff:** Jason Buntz, Emily Reed, Elyse Schmitt, Carol Scott, Doreen Harrell, Fanny Chirinos (Spanish speaker)
- TxDOT: Christopher Amy

### **Meeting Summary:**

Approximately eight community members attended the neighborhood meeting held in the event hall of St. Theresa Parish. Some CAC members were in attendance, as well as attendees from the community. Displays included maps of the four proposed build alternatives and the Refinery Row Community boundary. The main goal of the meeting was to gain a better understanding of the community as well as to answer attendees' questions about the project. Many attendees completed a community survey and then



proceeded to view the displays. The survey seeks to document the degree of community cohesion as well as project-specific concerns for the Community Impact Assessment (CIA). The CIA is being developed as part of the environmental impact statement and will characterize each potentially affected community, analyze impacts, and identify potential project benefits. Information regarding the project community survey was distributed both as a hard copy at the meeting, as well as through a link to the online webpage (www.ccharborbridgeproject.com).

Attendees were largely focused on the potential to raise the height of the bridge. Some attendees felt that the raised height of the bridge would increase production at the port which would further degrade the health of their community, while others saw potential for increased activity at the port as a positive economic benefit for Corpus Christi. Additional community sites were noted on the study area map.

Q = Question from public; C = comment from public; A = response from TxDOT